

A. Cotton

THE
WONDERS OF GOD
IN THE WILDERNESS;

OR

THE LIVES

OF THE

MOST CELEBRATED

SAINTS

OF THE

ORIENTAL DESARTS;

Faithfully collected out of the genuine works of
the holy fathers, and other ancient ecclesiastical
writers.



L O N D O N,

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

 HE lives of *the fathers of the desert* have been always looked upon, as one of the most edifying, as well as one of the most entertaining parts of antient church history. As the wonders of God's grace in them engaged from the beginning the attention of all wellwishers to Christianity; so they also employed the pens of the most eminent doctors of the church, and other ecclesiastical writers of the best note: and by their means immediately produced extraordinary great fruits, amongst all degrees of persons in every part of Christendom. Neither were these fruits confined to those earlier times alone, when the lives and maxims of these servants of God were first published

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published to the world : but as by the divine providence, the books, in which they are contained, have in every age of Christianity, been preserved with great care, in the hands of all such as aspired to religious perfection ; and since the invention of printing, have been communicated to all the faithful by innumerable editions ; as well in the learned languages, as in the vulgar tongues of most Christian nations : so by the divine mercy, they have in all ages produced, and continue, to this day, to produce in the proper soil of well-disposed souls, the happy fruits of grace and life.

That they may be of the like benefit to the souls of our countrymen ; as they have been to those of other nations ; this abstract of the lives and maxims, of these antient fathers, is here presented to the English reader : as an essay upon a part of history, which has never before appeared in our language. In this abstract, our first care has been,
to

P R E F A C E.

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to set down nothing; for the truth of which we had not good vouchers, and those well informed of the facts they deliver: and in the next place, to season the history, all along, not by larding it with reflexions of our own; but by setting down the words and sentiments of the Saints themselves; and the great lessons, they inculcated to those that came near them. We are sensible that many of the practices, recorded in the lives of these great men (which they were authorised to follow, by an extraordinary inspiration, or divine dispensation; out of the common road of the other servants of God) are more to be admired than imitated. But then, even here, and from these very things, we may take occasion, both to glorify God, who is ever wonderful in his Saints; and to animate ourselves, by looking on their extraordinary performances, to a greater fervour and perfection, in our ordinary ones.

We have added, by way of appendix, a collection of many of the remarkable

kable Sayings, together with a variety of memorable actions and examples of the antient religious ; out of the best monuments of those ages in which they lived ; which we hoped might both delight and edify the reader : whose spiritual advantage alone we desire to have in view : the whole in order to the greater glory of our common master, the God of all the Saints.

To whom alone be all praise, honour, and glory, for ever and ever, Amen.



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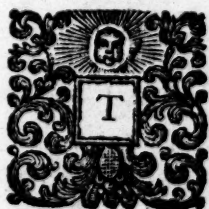




THE
WONDERS OF GOD
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OR,
THE LIVES
OF THE
ANCIENT SAINTS
OF THE ORIENTAL DESARTS.

ST. PAUL, the first Hermite.

Abridged from his Life written by St. Jerome.



HIS Saint was born in the lower Thebais, a province of Egypt, in the third century, of Christian parents, who being wealthy in worldly riches, took care to give him a liberal education, and to train him up both in the Greek and Egyptian literature; yet without any prejudice to his innocence, or Christian piety; for which he was remarkable from his childhood; being always of a meek and humble disposition, and
B greatly

greatly fearing and loving his God. His parents dying when he was about fifteen years of age, left him their estate; which he had not long enjoyed, when that bloody persecution, set on foot by the Emperor Decius, (who employed all manner of torments to oblige the Christians to renounce Jesus Christ and to offer sacrifice to idols) reached Egypt, also and Thebais; where it made many martyrs; and drove away many others into the desarts, and mountains; where great numbers of them perished with hunger, or sickness, or fell a prey to robbers, or wild beasts; as we learn from St. Denys, who was at that very time bishop of Alexandria, in his epistle to Fabius bishop of Antioch. Upon this occasion Paul also withdrew himself to a remote country-house, designing to lye concealed there, till the storm blew over: but his sisters husband, who was acquainted with the place of his retreat, conceived a resolution to betray him to the persecuters, in hopes of possessing himself of his estate. The Saint being informed of this his wicked resolution, left this country-house, and fled into the wilderness, where he proposed to pass his time, till the danger was over. Here as he advanced still further and further into the remoter parts of the desert, he came at last to a rocky mountain, at the foot of which he found a large den or cave: and going in he discovered there a kind of a spacious porch, open at the top to the heaven, but protected by an old palm-tree, which covered it with its spreading branches: near which there was a spring of clear water: and in the hollow parts of the mountain, several cells or rooms, which by the instruments he found there, appeared to have been formerly occupied by coiners. This place the Saint judged to be very proper for his abode; and embraced it as a dwelling assigned him by divine providence for the remainder of his life. And thus he who thought only at first to hide himself

himself for a while in the wilderness from the fury of the persecuters; was by the designs of God conducted thither, to be an inhabitant for life, and the first that should dedicate, as it were, and consecrate those deserts to divine love; and lived there for so many years a perfect model of an entire separation and disengagement from all ties and affections of this world; for the instruction and encouragement of many thousands, who should by his example in following ages embrace a recluse or eremitical life. Thus the malice of his brother-in-law, by driving him away from his worldly possessions, was the occasion of his embracing a life, in which, and by which, his soul was daily more and more enriched with the treasures of divine grace, and put in the most effectual way to secure to herself immense and everlasting treasures in the eternal possession of her God. Upon which occasion we may admire and adore the wonderful ways of the divine goodness, which usually draws the greatest good, even the sanctification and salvation of our souls, from what we poor mortals apprehend as great evils; more especially from the crosses and sufferings of this life, and the loss of those things, which we are apt to affect too much, to the prejudice of that love which we owe to God.

But who shall be able to relate the wonderful life which our Saint here led, estranged from all conversation of mortals; and perpetually attending to his God, by prayer, and contemplation, night and day; or the continual progress he made every day in the love of God, the true science of the Saints, and that better part, which they choose with Mary, and which shall never be taken from them? It may suffice to say that the perfection, which he attained to in divine love, which is the true measure of all sanctity, was so great and supereminent in the sight of God, as to exceed by far that of St. Antony, the

wonder of all ages for christian and religious perfection : and this by the testimony of God himself. And yet we are not to suppose that with all his sanctity he could be exempted in his solitude, no more than St. Antony was, from the temptations and molestations of the common enemy, who, by the permission of God, is most troublesome to those who oppose him most; though it all turns in the end to their greater good, and his own confusion. As to the food and raiment of St. Paul, we learn from my author, who had his account from the disciples of St. Antony, and they from their master, that he lived (at least for a good part of the time, till God was pleased to provide for him in a miraculous manner) on the dates which the palm-tree produced; and drank of the water of the spring: and as for his cloathing, he made himself a garment of the leaves of the same tree, woven together after the manner of a mat or a basket. And least this austerity of his life might seem to any one incredible, or a thing impossible, St. Jerome in his relation calls our Lord Jesus and his angels to witness, that he himself saw certain solitaires, in that part of the desert of Syria, which borders upon the Saracens; of whom one had lived, shut up for thirty years upon barley bread alone and muddy water; and another had chosen for his mansion an old pit or cistern, where he had no other food but five dry figs every day.

Our Saint had now lived in his solitude to the age of one hundred and thirteen years; when St. Antony who was now about ninety years old, was one day thinking with himself that no one amongst the religious of Egypt had penetrated farther into those wildernesses than he had done. Whereupon he was admonished in the night, in a dream, that there was one farther in the desert much better than he: and that he should make haste to visit him. In
compliance

compliance with this divine admonition, Antony set out at break of day in quest of this servant of God, with great confidence that he who had sent him forth, would conduct him to the place where he should find him. Thus he spent two whole days, fatigued with the labour of the journey, and broiled with the heat of the sun, which is violent in those sandy deserts: meeting with no mortal all the way, but only two monstrous shapes; the one representing a *centaur*, half a man and half a horse, and the other a *satyr*, made up of a man and a goat: which whether they were phantoms and illusions of the enemy, or monsters bred in those vast wildernesses is uncertain. The Saint opposed to these frightful figures, his usual arms of the shield of faith and the sign of the cross; and neither of them offered him any harm: but on the contrary the former, being asked where the servant of God dwelt, pointed towards the place, and then run swiftly away and disappeared; and the latter brought him some dates for his food; and being asked, who or what he was? delivered an intelligible answer (by some supernatural power) with an acknowledgment of God, and of Jesus Christ his Son: which gave the Saint occasion to glorify our Lord, and to reproach the unbelieving city of Alexandria, which refused to acknowledge the true and living God, which even beasts adored, and worshipped these very beasts instead of him. At which words of the Saint the monster fled away with incredible speed, and was seen no more.

Antony spent the two nights watching in prayer, and on the third morning, at break of day, he perceived at a distance a wolf panting for thirst, going into a cavern at the foot of a mountain. Wherefore coming up to the place after the beast was gone, he ventured into the cave, advancing cautiously and silently in the dark, till at length he perceived at

some distance a glimmering of light, (from the opening from above over the porch of the cell of the faint) upon which hastening forward he stumbled upon a stone; and by the noise gave occasion to St. Paul to shut his door, and to fasten it within. Antony was now convinced that here was the person whom he sought: and coming up to the door, earnestly begged for admittance, with many tears, lying prostrate on the ground from morning till noon (to teach us the necessity of fervor, and perseverance in prayer, if we would obtain what we ask:) till the holy old man at length opened the door to him. Then falling upon each others neck, and embracing each other, and calling one another by their proper names, as if they had been of long acquaintance, they joined in giving thanks to God: and when they had set down together, Paul said to Antony, see here the man, whom thou hast taken so much pains to seek, and who very speedily must turn to dust: tell me then if thou pleasest, how mankind goes on; what is the present state of the empire; and if there be any still remaining that worship devils, &c? Whilst they were discoursing on these matters, they perceived a raven, alighting upon one of the branches of the palm-tree; which gently flying down, dropped a loaf of bread before them; and so flew away. See said Paul, our Lord hath sent us a dinner: O how loving and merciful he is! There are now sixty years, that I have daily received from him half a loaf, but upon thy coming, Christ hath been pleased to send to his soldiers a double provision. Then after prayer and thanks-giving, they sat down by the spring, to take their meal which God had sent them: not without an humble contention, who should break the loaf; which they decided at last by breaking it conjointly: and so taking a moderate refreshment, they laid themselves down to sip at the fountain: and then returned to prayer and to the praises of God,

God, in which they spent the evening, and all the following night.

The next morning Paul thus accosted Antony.
 ‘ ’Tis a long time, brother, that I have known of
 ‘ your dwelling in these regions: and the Lord long
 ‘ ago promised me your company. But as my time
 ‘ is now come to go to rest, (as I have always *desired*
 ‘ *to be dissolved, and to be with Christ*) and my race
 ‘ being finished, the crown of justice waits for me,
 ‘ thou art now sent by the Lord to cover this body
 ‘ with ground, or rather to commit earth to earth.’
 Which when Antony heard, breaking out into sighs
 and tears, he begun to entreat him, not to leave
 him, but to take him along with him for his com-
 panion in so happy a journey. ‘ Thou oughtst not,
 ‘ said Paul, to seek in this thy own interest, but
 ‘ what may be for the good of others. It would be
 ‘ expedient indeed to thee to lay down this load of
 ‘ flesh, and to follow the Lamb: but it is expedient
 ‘ to the rest of the brethren, that thou shouldst con-
 ‘ tinue here, to instruct them by thy example.
 ‘ Wherefore go, I beseech thee, if it be not too much
 ‘ trouble, and bring hither the cloak, which was
 ‘ given thee by bishop Athanasius, to wrap up my
 ‘ body for its burial:’ which, says St. Jerome, he
 asked, not that he much cared whether his body was
 committed to the earth covered or naked; he who
 for so many years had used no other clothing, but
 the leaves of the palm-tree; but that Antony being
 absent when he died might be less afflicted with his
 death. To which our church-historians add another
 reason, *viz.* that by his desiring to be buried in the
 cloak of Athanasius (at that time violently persecu-
 ted by the Arians, for the Catholick faith of the
 Trinity) he might bear testimony to the cause of
 God and his truth, and declare to the world his
 communicating with this great prelate, who was
 then, and all his life-time, one of the principal cham-

pions of God and his church against the Arian heresy.

Antony being astonished to hear him speak of Athanasius, and of the cloak, (of which he could no otherwise have been informed but by revelation) as it he saw Christ himself in Paul, without making any further reply, kissed his hands with tears, and parting with him made the best of his way home to his own monastery. Here his two disciples (Amathas and Macarius) asked him where he had been so long. To whom he made no other answer, but, 'wo to me a sinner, who deserve not to bear the name of a religious man! I have seen Elias: I have seen John in the wilderness: I have seen with truth Paul in paradise.' And so without explaining himself any further, he went into his cell, striking his breast, and taking up the cloak, made hast away; without staying to take any refreshment: having Paul continually in his mind, and fearing that which indeed happened, lest Paul should die before he could reach his cave. On the second morning, when he had travelled for about three hours, he saw the soul of Paul in great glory ascending to heaven, attended with an innumerable multitude of angels and saints. At this sight falling down on the ground, he cried out lamenting and mourning: 'O Paul why dost thou leave me? why dost thou go without letting me salute thee? so lately have I come to know thee: and dost thou depart from me so soon?' Then rising up he went the remaining part of the way, notwithstanding his great age, and his having been before greatly fatigued, with such unaccustomed speed, that as he himself afterwards relates, he seemed rather to fly than to walk.

When he came into the cave, and entered in, he found the body of the Saint in the posture of one at prayer, kneeling with hands lifted up: so that thinking he might be alive, he knelt down to pray with him,

him. But not perceiving him to sigh, as he was accustomed in his prayers, he was convinced he was dead. Wherefore weeping and embracing the dead body, he wrapt it up in the cloak, and carried it out; singing hymns and psalms according to the christian tradition. But here no small difficulty occurred, how he should bury the body, having no spade or other instrument to make a grave: so that what to do he knew not: to go back to his monastery was three days journey: to stay where he was, was doing nothing. Whilst he was in this perplexity, behold two lions, from the remoter part of the wilderness, came running with all speed towards him. At the sight of them, Antony was at first surprized; but presently recollecting himself in God, he shook off all fear, and stood his ground; till the beasts coming up to the place, went and laid themselves down at the feet of the deceased Saint, and seemed in their way to lament his death. Then going to a little distance off, they began to scratch up the sandy ground with their claws; and did not cease till they had made a hole big enough to answer the purpose of a grave. Which when they had done coming to Antony as it were for their wages, wagging their ears and hanging down their heads, they licked his hands and his feet. The Saint conceiving that in their mute way they craved his blessing, took occasion to praise and glorify God, whom all his creatures serve; and then prayed in this manner: 'O Lord, without whose disposition not a leaf falls from the tree, nor a sparrow falls to the ground, give to them as thou knowest best:' and so making them a sign with his hand he sent them away. Then taking the dead body of St. Paul, he laid it down in the grave which they had made, and covered it with the earth. And so returned home, carrying with him the garment made of the leaves of the palm-tree, which Paul had worn (which for the remaining years of his life he always

always put on, upon the solemn festivals of Easter, and Pentecost) and related all that he had seen and done to his disciples, from whom St. Jerome had his account.

And here it may not be improper, to reflect, with this holy Doctor of the church, in the conclusion of his life of this Saint, on the difference between the cloathing, eating, drinking, lodging, and in a word, the whole manner of living of this servant of God, and that of worldlings, who never think they have enough, and are always slaves to their own corrupt inclinations. Paul coveted nothing, and wanted nothing: and therefore was always easy and content: they are always coveting and wanting, and never perfectly easy. Paul with his mean fare enjoyed long life and health, together with a good conscience and interior peace: their intemperances and lusts, their passions, their pride, their ambition, their avarice, their envy, their cares and fears, and the contradictions of their will and humour, to which they are perpetually exposed, rob them of their health, shorten their days, and banish both grace and peace far from their souls. In fine, Paul with all his poverty and mortifications, was happy even here in the experience of the love of his God; in the sense of his divine presence, in the contemplation of his heavenly truths, in the sweets he found in mental prayer, and an inward conversation with our Lord; in the consolations of the Holy Ghost, &c; and by this means he passed his days in good things (truly such) till he was in an instant put in full possession, by death, of the sovereign and infinite good for eternity: whereas they after their short deluding dream of an imaginary happiness, which is ever flying away from them, awake in a moment, and find themselves immersed in the bottomless pit of real, endless and insupportable miseries.

ST. ANTONY.

From his Life written by the great St. Athanasius.

ST. Antony was born in Egypt about the middle of the third century, of parents noble according to the world, and wealthy, but withal pious and religious. By them he was trained up at home, in great innocence, so as to be a stranger in a manner to the world; and was, by his own inclinations, intirely restrained from the company of others of his age, and even from frequenting the schools with them, for fear of his morals being corrupted by their conversation or bad example. His whole desire was bent upon God: he frequented the church in the company of his parents, and assisted there with great modesty, gravity and attention; and endeavoured to follow in his practice the instructions and rules of life which he there learnt. He was not fond as children usually are, of dainties, or of such things as are sweet, and agreeable to their appetite, but always took what his parents gave him, and sought nothing more.

He was about eighteen or twenty years old, when his parents dying, left him master of all their wealth, which was considerable, with a little sister that was very young. But scarce six months were passed after their death, when one day, going to church according to his custom, and thinking with himself how the Apostles had left all to follow our Lord, and the primitive Christians (Acts iv.) had sold their possessions, and laid the price at the feet of the Apostles, to be by them distributed to such as were in want; and how great would be the reward in heaven, of them that did in this manner; at his coming into the church he heard the gospel read out of Matt. xix. where our Saviour says to the young man that was rich, v. 21.
 ' If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and
 ' give

‘ give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in
‘ heaven, and come follow me.’ These words he
took as addressed by our Lord to himself, and parti-
cularly designed for him : And in consequence of this
divine call, he presently parted with his whole estate
in lands, sold his moveables, which were of great
value, and distributed the price to the poor, only
reserving a small matter for the use of his sister.
Some-time after, when he had heard in the church that
part of the gospel read (Matt. vi.) where our Lord
warns his disciples not to be careful for to-morrow,
he concluded to part with his house also, and to dis-
tribute all that remained to the poor, so having re-
commended his young sister to the care of certain
devout virgins, to be trained up in their way of life ;
he quitted the world for good and all, and entred
with a strong resolution upon the narrow and arduous
path of religious perfection.

There were not very many at that time in Egypt that
professed a monastic life ; and those that did, retired
not into the desarts ; but only lived in separated cells
in the country, at a small distance from their res-
pective villages. One of these, now advanced in years,
who from his youth had followed this manner of life,
lived in the neighbourhood : Him Antony proposed
to imitate. And accordingly he began to follow the
same kind of life ; but in places something more
remote from his own village. And as often as he
could hear of any one, that laboured with more di-
ligence than ordinary in the pursuit of virtue and
perfection, he was sure to visit him, and to seek in
his conversation and method of life, some lessons for
his own instruction and edification. In the mean
time he laboured with his own hands, for his daily
food ; and all that he gained over and above what
was necessary to purchase his pittance of bread, he
gave to the poor : he prayed very much, and en-
deavouring quite to forget the world and all his
wordly

worldly kindred, he turned all his affections and desires towards the purchasing the hidden treasure of true wisdom, and the precious pearl of divine love. In order to this he gave diligent attention to the word of God, contained in the holy scriptures, which he heard, and by meditating on it, laid up all those precepts of our Lord in such manner in his soul, as never to forget any of them; but to have them always written in his memory as in a book. He envied no one, but had always a great deference for the other servants of God; and was continually studying to remark those virtues, in which each one of them excelled, in order to imitate them; and so to assemble as it were, and unite together in himself the different perfections which he observed in all the rest. And thus he quickly outstripped them all; and yet was always most humble and meek, & full of brotherly love and charity; so as to be ever most dear to them all.

The devil, who was enraged to see so much ardour in the pursuit of virtue in a person so young, employed all his arts and stratagems to divert him from his holy undertaking, and to bring him back again into the world: and for this end, he strongly represented to his imagination his riches and possessions, which he had quitted; the nobility of his family, the glory of this world, the advantages and pleasures of a worldly life; and on the other hand the extreme difficulties and labours to be undergone in this way, which he had chosen; the weakness of his body, unfit for such extraordinary fatigues; the long time he might have to live under this insupportable burthen, &c. suggesting withal, that it was a crime in him to have abandoned, in the manner he did, his little sister, whom he was obliged to have taken care of: and by these and such like representations, he strove to induce him, after he had put his hand to the plow, to look back, and to return again to the world. But
the

the Saint overcame all his temptations, by a lively faith in Christ crucified, and by continual and fervent prayer. Wherefore the enemy changed his batteries, and assaulted him in a most violent manner, night and day, sleeping and waking, with carnal suggestions, and allurements to lust. But the holy young man, armed with divine grace, which he procured by earnest and constant prayer, conquered also all these temptations; by perpetually opposing to them watchings, fastings and mortifications of the flesh; together with the faith and remembrance of the judgment to come, of the worm that never dies, and of the eternal flames of hell. And by these means, he gained so complete a victory over the enemy, that he ceased to molest him any more in this kind. It was in consequence of this victory, that the unclean spirit one day appeared to the Saint, in the shape of a most filthy, ugly, black boy; bitterly weeping and lamenting, that after having deceived and seduced so many, he had been overcome by him. And being asked who he was? He answered he was the spirit of impurity, who made it his business to wage a continual war against youth, in which he was commonly successful; and that it was he, that had so often attacked him, but had always been repulsed. Upon this the Saint giving thanks to God, was animated with a new courage against this detestable spirit; and began to sing aloud those words of the Psalmist. *The Lord is my helper, and I will despise my enemies* (Ps. cxvii. 7.) At which the filthy phantom was put to flight.

These first victories did not render Antony negligent; as if he might now think himself secure, and on that account might relent in his spiritual exercises: for he very well knew that the devil never sleeps, and that he has a thousand ways of tricking and deceiving unwary souls: especially as he holds a close correspondence with the flesh, our domestic enemy, and with our unhappy self-love, and its passions.

sions. Wherefore the holy young man resolved to be still more upon his guard; and to make every day a still greater progress in the perfection of a religious life. He chastised his body, and brought it under subjection by extraordinary austerities; which how difficult soever in themselves, were sweet and agreeable to him, by reason of that ardent affection with which he embraced them. He frequently watched whole nights in prayer. He eat but once in the four and twenty hours; and that not till after sun-set. His food was nothing but bread and salt; his drink nothing but water, and this in a small quantity: he sometimes fasted two days, or more, without taking any thing at all. His bed was at the best a sort of a mat made of bulrushes, with a covering of hair-cloth; and sometimes only the bare ground. His application to God was without ceasing; and like the Apostle (Philip iii. 13, 14) *forgetting the things that were behind, that is all he had done already; he was continually stretching forth himself to the things that were before; and pressing with all his power towards the mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: ever considering himself, as if he was just then beginning, and thinking of no more than of the present day.*

All this not being sufficient to satisfy the hunger and thirst he had after perfection, he chose for himself a dwelling, amongst the tombs or monuments of the dead. In one of these he shut himself up: where he received from time to time his necessary sustenance from a religious man that came to visit him. The devil, who foresaw the consequences he had to apprehend from this new kind of enterprize; and fearing lest by degrees this young man should draw many by his example into the desert, to the prejudice of his usurped empire; was resolved not to let him go on thus. And therefore (God so permitting for the greater merit and glory of his Saint)

gathering

gathering together his infernal spirits, he attacked him, one night, with the utmost fury, inflicting upon him many stripes, and grievous wounds, and torments, till he left him stretched out, like one dead, without either speech or motion. In this condition his friend found him the next morning, and carried him back to the village on his shoulders; where a great multitude of his kindred and neighbours were assembled about him to perform his funeral obsequies. When, behold, towards midnight, coming to himself, like one awakened from a deep sleep, and looking about him, he perceived his friend there watching by him (for the rest were all asleep) and he made a sign to him, to carry him back again to his monument, without waking any of the company. He did so, and Antony being now alone, but not yet able to support himself on his feet, by reason of his late treatment, performed his devotions, as well as he could, lying prostrate on the floor. At the end of his prayer, lifting up his voice, in defiance of the spirits of darkness, he cried out, with a lively faith and confidence in his God. 'Lo here am I: here is Antony, ready to encounter with you all: I shall not run away; do your worst; none of you shall be able to separate me from the love of Christ. Then he began to sing with the Psalmist, *If whole armies should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear.* Ps. xxvi. 3.

The enemy could not endure to be thus outbraved, and therefore, reassembling his hellish fiends, he returned to the attack, with greater violence than before: and raising on a sudden a great noise, which shook the very foundations of the place, he laid it open on all sides: and entering in, with all his wicked ones, in the shape of wild beasts, and serpents of sundry kinds, he not only sought to terrify him, with their hideous yellings, roarings, howlings, hissing, &c, but also made him feel their fury in a
most

most sensible manner, in the fresh wounds they inflicted upon him. But his courage and constancy was proof against all their attempts: so that notwithstanding the excessive pains, which he felt in his wounded body, he mocked at all their vain efforts, and reproached them with their weakness and cowardice, and with those forms of brutes, to which they were now reduced, who formerly had proudly pretended to be like to God. At length Jesus Christ was pleased to come in a visible manner to the assistance of his servant, in this conflict. For lifting up his eyes, he saw the top of the place open, and a bright ray of divine light entering in, which dissipated in a moment both all those internal spirits, and all his pains. The Saint understood that his Lord was there: and addressing himself to him, he said: 'Where wast thou my good Jesus all this while? Where wast thou? Why didst thou not come before to heal my wounds?' The Lord answered: I was here, Antony: but I waited to see thy combat. And now because thou hast fought so bravely, and not yielded; I will always assist thee, and make thy name famous over all the earth.' Having heard these words, Antony raised himself up to pray: and found that our Lord had now given him a greater strength, than he had had before. Now he was about thirty five years old when this happened to him.

After this being desirous of advancing still more in Christian perfection, he took a resolution of withdrawing himself altogether from the conversation of men, and retiring into the desert. This resolution he communicated to the old monk his friend; of whom we spoke above, proposing to him to accompany him: but the old man excused himself, alledging his age, and the novelty of such an enterprize. However Antony, no way discouraged, set out upon his journey towards the heart of the wilderness, at that time utterly uninhabited, and lying at a very great
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distance from any town or village. As he was going on his way, he saw lying on the ground a large dish of silver, with which the enemy sought to interrupt his journey: but he easily discovered the artifice; and cried out: ‘ This is a trick of thine, satan: thou shalt not divert me from my resolution: keep thy silver to thyself to perish with thee.’ At which words the dish was immediately dissolved into smoke. Afterwards a large lump of true gold was flung in his way: but this was no more capable of stopping him, than the glittering appearance was of the silver dish: but as soon as he saw it, he run away from it, with his utmost speed, as if he were flying from a devouring fire; and proceeded on his way till he came to a mountain, where he found an old forsaken castle, full of serpents and venomous creatures, which had taken up their lodging there, by reason of the long time it had not been inhabited. This place he made choice of for his dwelling; taking in with him his provision of bread, which according to his scanty allowance might suffice him for six months, and having a little water there.

At his coming in to take possession of this castle, all its old inhabitants, the serpents, and other venomous creatures fled away, and left the whole place to him: who shut up the entrance with stones; and for twenty years that he dwelt there, neither went out at any time himself, nor suffered any one to come in to him: not even those who brought him, at the end of every half year, a fresh provision of bread; which they conveyed to him, by getting up to the roof, and so letting it down to him. They that came thither (as many did in process of time) out of a desire of seeing him, or learning what was become of him, sometimes staid the whole night, at the door: and were surprized to hear the noises, with which the devils sought to molest him; and the voices, as it were of many persons contending with him, and saying:

saying: 'Why camest thou into our habitations? What hast thou to do with the desert? Get thee gone out of these coasts, which belong not to thee; never think to be able to stay here; or to resist our attacks.' When they that were without heard these or the like words, at first they imagined some men had found means to get in to his habitation, and were there contending with him: but looking through the chinks, and seeing that he was all alone, they understood that the voices they had heard were of evil spirits, seeking to drive him thence. And when, upon this occasion, they were very much frightened, and called to Antony, begging him to help them: he comforted, and encouraged them from within, bidding them to arm themselves with the sign of the cross, and to make no account of these vain terrours. At other times when they came, and scarce expected to find him alive, they heard him chearfully singing within, and repeating those words of the 67th psalm: *Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: and let them that hate him flee from before his face: as smoke vanisheth so let them vanish away: as wax melteth before the fire so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.*

At the end of twenty years, which he had spent with God, in this solitude, Antony, yielding to the importunity of the multitudes, that resorted to him; and were even ready to force their way into his habitation: more especially as many of them desired also to learn and to imitate his manner of life, came forth, as it were out of a heavenly sanctuary, with such a serenity in his countenance, a liveliness in his colour and face, and a strength and vigour in his whole person, as was admired by all that saw him. And here God was pleased to work many miracles by him, in casting out devils from such as were possessed, and healing various diseases. The Saint took occasion, at the same time, to make powerful exhortations to those that addressed themselves to him: he comforted

the afflicted, he instructed the ignorant, he reconciled such as were at variance: he was earnest with all to look to the welfare of their souls, and to prefer nothing before the love of Christ. He set before the eyes of his auditors, the greatness of the good things to come in a happy eternity; and the infinite goodness and mercy of God; and his benefits and love for us; which he has particularly manifested in not sparing his own Son, but delivering him up to death for the salvation of us all. And by these and such like discourses, he brought over a great number of his hearers to a contempt of all those things that pass with time, and to an effectual resolution of wholly dedicating the remainder of the short days of their mortality, to the love and service of their God, in a solitary and religious life. Thus by degrees the deserts and mountains began to be peopled with a number of holy souls (all acknowledging Antony for their father, their founder, and their master) who by the purity and sanctity of their lives, seemed to be so many Angels in human bodies. They renounced all the honours, riches and pleasures of this world; or rather they exchanged them for far greater and more solid honours, riches and pleasures even here, and for such as shall never end hereafter. They watched and prayed without ceasing; they meditated often on the word of God; they sung day and night the praises of God; they kept in a manner a continual fast; they laboured with their hands, for their own support; and to have wherewith all to supply the necessities of their indigent neighbours: In fine, they all lived in a holy union, and perfect charity, without murmuring or detractions: and had no other ambition or strife, but who should outdo his neighbour, in all kind of Christian virtues. So that to see this multitude of servants of God, separated at a distance, both in place and manners, from the children of the world, in those vast deserts,
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and leading there such angelical lives; was enough to make any one cry out with Balaam, Numb. 24. *How beautiful are thy pavilions, O Jacob, and thy tents O Israel, as valleys overshadowed with woods, as well watered gardens near the rivers: as tabernacles which the Lord hath pitched, &c.*

And here St. Athanasius sets down at large an excellent discourse, which Antony made one day, at the desire, and for the instruction of these his disciples. In which, after earnestly exhorting them to fervor and constancy, in pursuing their holy undertaking; so as never to slacken their pace, but to renew their resolutions every day, as if they were but just now beginning; and to strive to advance by great steps every day towards religious perfection: he puts them in mind: First of the shortness of the time of this mortal life, and of the length of eternity: and how small a matter all that is, which God requires of us, for the purchasing of eternal life: that all the labours and sufferings of this life shall quickly have an end, but our reward shall continue forever. 2ly, Therefore he would not have them think, they had done any great matter, in parting with a little ground, or houses, or money; from which they must have otherwise, whether they would or no, in a short time, been separated by death: since what they were to receive from our Lord, in exchange for what they had left for his sake, would be infinitely more valuable than the possession of the whole earth, and would be theirs for all eternity. 3ly, He inculcates to them that a Christian ought not to set his affection, or bestow his care upon any of those things, which he cannot take away with him when he dies: but only on such things, as may bring him on in his way to heaven; and there continue with him to eternity: such as true wisdom, purity of soul and body, christian justice, fortitude, charity, and the peace of the soul, by the victory over our passions:

for these are the true goods of a Christian, which alone are worthy of his love. 4ly, He puts them in mind, that they are strictly obliged, in consequence of their creation, to dedicate their whole lives to the service of that Lord, who made them for this very end, that they should be his servants; and who upon all manner of titles, has an indisputable right to all their service: and that neither their past, nor present labours are to exempt them from continuing in this service till death: so that they must resolve to labour to the end, if they would not lose their crown: relying always on the assistance of their good God, who never forsakes them, that do not first forsake him. 5ly, He recommends to them the remembrance of death; of the certainty of it, and the uncertainty of the hour in which we shall be called for hence; of the judgment that is to follow after death, and of the eternity to come; as so many powerful restraints to keep them from all sin; and as sovereign means to cure their sloth, to spur them on to all virtue, to wean their affections from transitory things; and to teach them to tread under their feet, the riches and pleasures of the world, which we must so suddenly part with. 6ly, He tells them that the Greeks took great pains, and travelled into distant countries, in order to meet with masters, from whom they might learn vain and empty sciences, such as were of no service to their souls in order to eternity: But that the Christian in order to acquire true wisdom, and the science of the saints, which conducts to eternal life, needed to go no farther, than into his own soul; that there he should find his true master, (if he sought him by a spirit of recollection and prayer) there he should find the kingdom of God, and all good. 7ly, He exhorts them to fight in a particular manner against the tyranny, as he calls it, of the passion of anger, as a mortal evil, and a capital enemy of the justice of God: and therefore he would have them

them to keep a constant guard upon their own hearts. The more because of the many enemies, that are continually waging war against Christians, but more especially against religious men and women; and who employ a thousand tricks, and artifices to deceive the unwary. And here, as one that had long experience in this kind of warfare, he acquaints them with the different stratagems, and manifold temptations, by which these wicked spirits labour, without ceasing, to withdraw religious souls from the service of God, and to bring them back to the broad road of the world, and to the ways of iniquity and sin: but for their comfort and encouragement, he assures them, that these enemies have no power over such as heartily resist them, and despise their suggestions: that Christ has triumphed over them by his death: and that a lively faith in him, a purity and sincerity in seeking him: a diligence in the spiritual exercises, of watching, praying, fasting, &c. together with the virtues of meekness, voluntary poverty, humility, contempt of vain-glory, and especially an ardent devotion to Christ crucified, are arms, which all the powers of hell cannot withstand.

By such lessons as these, and especially by the great example of their master, the disciples of Antony were encouraged, and spurred on to make a daily progress in the way of God: when the persecution, which had been first set on foot by Diocletian, and carried on with great fury by Maximian Galerius, raged exceedingly in Egypt, (where it crowned innumerable martyrs) and many were led to Alexandria out of the country, to be put to death for Christ. On this occasion Antony left his cell, to follow these that were going to be victims of Christ: saying to his disciples, 'let us go to the glorious triumphs of our brethren: that we may either have a share with them in the fight, or at least be spectators of their conflict.' He was in hopes of obtaining for

himself the crown of martyrdom : but could not deliver himself up ; nor get to be associated with the glorious confessors, that were condemned to the mines, or confined to the prisons. However when any were brought before the judge, he accompanied them in the court, and with great liberty and diligence exhorted them to constancy and perseverance. And when they were sentenced to die, he rejoiced in their victory, as if it had been his own, and failed not to accompany them to the place of execution, to be a witness of their happy triumph. The judge seeing the courage and zeal of Antony and his companions, published an order, prohibiting any of the monks to be present in court, at the trials of the Christians ; and enjoining to them all to depart from the city. Upon these orders the others absconded for that day : but Antony, fearing nothing, washed his garments, and took the next opportunity to present himself, in a more eminent place to the sight of the judge, desiring nothing more than to suffer for Christ. But God was pleased to accept of his good-will, and to reserve his servant, for the benefit of innumerable souls. However he continued assisting and encouraging upon all occasions the confessors of Christ, till the storm of the persecution was blown over : and then he returned with a new fervour to his former solitude. Where he redoubled his watchings and fastings : wearing always a garment of haircloth, next to his skin, and never washing his body ; in-somuch that no one ever saw Antony naked during his life.

And now he began to shut himself up for a time in his cell, without admitting any one to come in to him. But he could not hinder many from resorting to his door, to seek a cure for their different maladies, through the experience they had of the miracles that God frequently wrought by him ; and even staying there all night : so that partly to avoid the
distrac-

distractions caused by this concourse of people, and partly to fly the danger of vain-glory ; he took a resolution to go as far as the higher Thebais, where no man might know him. Wherefore, taking some bread with him, he went to the bank of the Nile, and there sat down, waiting for some boat, that might pass that way. And here he heard a voice, saying to him ‘ Antony, whither art thou going? And to what end?’ He, as one accustomed to such colloquies, answered without fear. ‘ Because the people will not let me be quiet; but require things of me, that are out of the reach of my weakness; I have thought it best to go away to the higher Thebais. If thou goest, said the voice, to the place thou proposest, thou shalt endure a greater, yea a double labour: but if thou desirest to be quiet indeed, go thy way now to such a place, naming a mountain in the heart of the wilderness. But who, said Antony, shall shew me the way? for there are no tracks or paths that lead thither: and I know nothing of the country.’ He that spoke with him replied, that there were some Saracens, or Arabians, at hand, who were come into Egypt to trade, and that they would shew him the way. Antony followed this heavenly direction, and going up to the Saracens, desired they would take him along with them, in their journey through the desert: and after having travelled with them three days and three nights, he arrived at the place appointed him by heaven: which was a very high mountain; at the foot of which there was a spring of clear water, and in the adjacent field a few wild palm-trees. Here then he resolved to fix his abode, where he might live quite separate from the conversation of men. As to his food, he contented himself with a little bread (which the Saracens, admiring his virtue, gave him at parting; or bestowed upon him afterwards when they passed that way) and with the small provision of
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wild dates, which the palms afforded him: till his brethren, having found out the place of his retreat, brought him necessaries from time to time. Antony desired to ease them of that trouble, and having procured, by their means, a proper instrument, and some wheat; and found a little spot of ground fit for the purpose, he sowed the wheat, which brought him a crop sufficient for his use; to his great satisfaction, for that he was thus enabled to live by the labour of his hands, without being troublesome to any one. He also made a little garden for herbs, to entertain his brethren with, when they came wearied to him through the burning desarts. This spot of ground was exposed to the beasts, which resorted thither for the sake of the spring, and did no small damage to Antony, by feeding upon his herbs and his corn, wherefore having caught one of them, he said to them all: why do you this wrong to me, who do none to you? Get ye gone: and in the name of the Lord, never come hither any more. From which time, they were never seen to come near that place.

Whilst Antony was here entertaining himself with his God, the devils his unwearied enemies ceased not to wage a perpetual war against him: but he despised all their efforts, and by his usual arms of a lively faith, and fervent prayer, always triumphed over them. His disciples, who came to visit him, were sometimes witnesses of his conflicts: and related how they had heard the tumultuous noise and voices of a numerous people, with the rattling of arms; and had seen the whole mountain covered with a multitude of devils; and Antony fighting against them, and putting them all to flight by his prayers. 'It is indeed worthy of admiration, says St. Athanasius, that in so vast a wilderness, one man alone should have stood his ground so long, without either apprehending the daily encounters, he met with from wicked spirits; or yielding to the fury of
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' of so many wild beasts, and serpents, as swarm in
 ' those deserts. But it was with good reason that
 ' David sung Ps. cxxiv. *They that trust in the Lord*
 ' *shall be as mount Sion, they shall not be moved forever.*
 ' For so Antony keeping his mind firm, quiet and
 ' unmoveable in God, put all the devils to flight
 ' and had *the beasts of the earth at peace with him.*'
 Job v. 23. and subject to him. One night when he
 was watching in prayer, the devil brought together
 about him, such a multitude of wild beasts, that it
 seemed as if there were none left behind in the whole
 desert: and all of them encompassing him on every
 side, with open jaws, threatened to tear him in pieces.
 The Saint understanding the artifice of the malignant
 spirit, said to them unconcernedly: ' If the Lord has
 ' given you any power over me, use that power in
 ' devouring of me. But if you are brought hither by
 ' devils, get you gone without delay, for I am a ser-
 ' vant of Christ.' He had no sooner spoke these
 words but all this multitude of wild beasts fled
 away, and left him alone to continue his devotions.
 Another time, when he was at work in the day,
 making baskets according to his custom, to exchange
 them for the provisions which the brethren brought
 him; a monster presented itself before him, which
 appeared to be half a man and half an ass. He
 made the sign of the cross at the sight: and said
 I am a servant of Christ. ' If thou art sent to me,
 ' here I am: I dont run away.' At these words the
 monster was instantly put to flight, and falling down
 in the midst of its flight, was burst and destroyed:
 to shew how all the attempts of Satan against An-
 tony should in the end perish and come to nothing.

After some time the brethren prevailed on the man
 of God, to come down from his mountain, in or-
 der to visit their monasteries. Now in their way
 homeward through those burning deserts, their pro-
 vision of water quite failed them; and as none could
 be

be found there, and the weather was violently hot, they were all in danger of perishing. Antony on this occasion had recourse to prayer; and withdrawing himself to a little distance from the company, and falling upon his knees, implored, with his hands stretched forth to heaven, the mercy of the Lord. When behold the tears which he shed, presently brought out of the earth, in that same place, a spring of water, with which they both refreshed their own thirst, saved the life of their camel, and filled their vessels, for the remainder of their journey. The Saint was received, with great joy, by all the religious, as their common father; and conceived no less joy in himself, to see the fervour and resolution, with which they all applied themselves to their spiritual exercises. And that he might not seem to come to them from his mountain empty handed, he made them excellent exhortations in order to their spiritual progress. He had also the comfort here to hear the agreeable news, that his sister, whom he had left so young in the world, was now grown old in the profession of virginity, and was become mistress and superior of other holy virgins in a religious life.

After some days Antony returned again to his mountain: where he now received more frequent visits; as well from his own religious, as from others, who being possessed or obsessed with evil spirits, or afflicted with divers infirmities, had recourse to his prayers, for their delivery: in which kinds God wrought many miracles by him; favouring him also with prophetic light, and other extraordinary graces and gifts. He exhorted all that came to him
 ‘ to have a strong faith in Jesus Christ: to love him
 ‘ with all their hearts: to keep their minds pure from
 ‘ all evil thoughts; and their bodies from all un-
 ‘ cleanness: not to suffer themselves to be imposed
 ‘ upon by the love of the belly: to hate vain glory:
 ‘ to pray very often: to sing psalms to the divine
 ‘ praise,

' praise, every morning, noon and night: to medi-
 ' tate on the precepts of the word of God; to have
 ' the great examples of the Saints always before their
 ' eyes, in order to spur themselves on to the prac-
 ' tice of all virtues: *not to let the sun set upon their*
 ' *anger* Eph. iv: which precept of the apostle he
 ' applied to all other sins; recommending to all to
 ' call themselves to a strict account by a daily exa-
 ' mination of conscience, and to repent and amend
 ' without delay, whensoever they found themselves
 ' to have failed in any thing. He added that if they
 ' did not discover any guilt in themselves, they must
 ' not therefore be puffed up with self conceit, or pre-
 ' sume to justify themselves, and despise others; but
 ' rather fear, lest their self-love should blind them
 ' and deceive them; remembering that an all-seeing
 ' God is to be their judge: that his judgments are
 ' very different from those of men: and that, as the
 ' wiseman writes Prov. 14 and 16, *there is a way that*
 ' *seemeth right to man; and the latter end thereof leadeth*
 ' *to death.*

One day, about the ninth hour (that is, about
 three of the clock in the afternoon) when he had be-
 gun his prayer, before the taking of his meal, he
 had a rapt or extasy, in which he saw himself in
 spirit carried up on high by Angels; and the de-
 mons of the air opposing his passage; and alledging
 against him the sins of his younger days, from his
 very childhood: and when the Angels replied, that
 these sins by the mercy of Christ had been forgiven;
 and bid them charge him, if they could, with any
 thing material, that he had committed, since he
 consecrated himself to God in a religious state of
 life: these lying spirits forged against him many
 false accusations, which they could not prove; and
 therefore they were forced to leave the passage free
 for him. Upon this, Antony returned to himself,
 but so greatly affected with what he had seen, and
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with this dreadful and dangerous conflict, that the poor soul has to go through, with these princes of darkness; that he forgot his food, and spent the whole remainder of the day, and all the night in sighs and lamentations; considering the dangers from these wicked spirits, that threaten the souls of men both in life and death: which nevertheless unthinking mortals so little apprehend. Another time, when his disciples had been inquiring of him, concerning the state of souls immediately after death, he was called upon in the night by a voice saying: Antony arise, go out, and see. He arose, and went out, and looking up towards heaven, he saw a specter of a monstrous height, and dreadful aspect, whose head reached the clouds: he saw also persons with wings, that sought to fly up to heaven: and he perceived how the monster, with hands stretched out, strove to stop them in their passage; and how he caught some of them, and cast them down to the earth; but could not stop others from flying up above his head; and so mounting to heaven. By which vision he was given to understand how the devil had power to stop the flight of those departing souls, that were in sin; but had no power over pure and holy souls, to hinder their flying up to heaven. These visions Antony related to his disciples: not out of ostentation, or vain glory (for he was always averse to attributing any thing to himself; or suffering any thing to be ascribed to him) but merely for their instruction and edification.

As to the rest, there was nothing more meek and patient than Antony: nothing more humble. He had a particular respect and veneration for all the clergy; giving even to the lowest clerk in minor orders the preference before himself; and ever bowing down his head before bishops, or priests, to crave their benediction. He that was so great a master himself in spirituals, and so divinely taught, was not ashamed to

to seek instruction, not only from the clerks, that came to visit him, but even from his own disciples; and whatsoever good he heard from any one, he humbly and thankfully acknowledged himself assisted thereby. Amongst other gifts with which he was favoured by our Lord, he was particularly remarkable for an admirable grace that shewed itself in his countenance; which distinguished him in such manner from all the rest of the holy inhabitants of the desarts, that any stranger that came to visit him, though he happened to be in the company of a multitude of other monks; leaving all the others, would be sure to run up to him: as if the purity of his soul had shone forth from his very face: which was always modestly chearful and amiable; and never altered either by prosperity, or adversity. However he would have no communication with schismatics or hereticks: but exhorted all that came near him, to fly their dangerous conversation and impious doctrines. He had a particular horror for the blasphemies of the Arians; whom he considered as the fore-runners of Antichrist. He even quitted for a while his solitude (at the desire of Athanasius and the catholic bishops) to go to Alexandria to confute their wicked assertions: where by his doctrine and miracles, he not only effectually confuted the hereticks, and confirmed the catholicks in their faith, but also brought over a great number of infidels to the Christian religion. The heathen philosophers also divers times came to dispute with him about religion; imagining they should easily entangle, with their captious reasonings and learned sophistry, a man so entirely illiterate, and an utter stranger to all human sciences, as Antony was known to be: but they were strangely surprized to find with what depth of wisdom, he answered all their objections; proved to them the truth of the Christian religion, in a manner to which they

they knew not what to reply : and even confirmed it with miracles wrought in their presence.

The reputation of Antony's sanctity and heavenly wisdom, was not confined to Egypt : it spread itself far and near through a great part of the known world ; it even reached the imperial court, insomuch that the emperor Constantine the great, and his sons Constans and Constantius wrote several times to him, and begged that he would pleasure them with an answer. As to his part, he made very little account of this honour, and told his disciples, that they were not to think it much, that an emperor, who was no more than a mortal man, should write to him ; but rather they ought to admire and to bear always in mind that the eternal God had been so good as to write his law for man, and to send down his only Son, to deliver his word to them. However at the desire of all the brethren, he returned an answer to these princes : in which after congratulating with them, for their believing in Christ, and worshiping him ; he gave them wholesome documents, for the welfare of their souls : advising them not to make any great account of their worldly grandeur and power, or of any of those things that pass away with time, and never to forget that they were mortals, who must quickly appear before another judge. He also put them in mind of their obligation of shewing clemency to their subjects, of rendering them justice, and of succouring the poor and distressed : and that they must remember that the true and everlasting king of all ages is Jesus Christ alone.

After Antony had finished the business that brought him to Alexandria, he hastened home to his cell on the mountain, and to his usual exercises and austerities. For he used to say that a religious man conversing with seculars, out of his monastery, was like a fish out of the water, which is in danger of perishing, except it quickly be restored again to its element :
and

and therefore for his own part, he never would come out of his solitude, but when some work of great charity obliged him to it. However he willingly received seculars that came to him, and entertained them with heavenly discourses, exhorting them to look beyond this world, and to labour for a happiness that shall have no end. And such was the unction and efficacy God gave to his words, that many were moved by him to give up their honours, their riches, and all their worldly hopes, in order to dedicate themselves eternally to the same happy service, in which they saw him engaged. He seemed to have been given to the land of Egypt by our Lord, as an excellent physician; to heal all their spiritual diseases. For whosoever came to him in his troubles and temptations, found in his conversation a sensible benefit, so that if he came with sorrow he returned with joy, if he came with rancour in his heart against his neighbour he returned with dispositions of peace and charity: if he came oppressed with the sense of his poverty, and distress, he returned with a contempt of the riches of this world, and a willingness to take up the cross, and to wear the livery of Jesus Christ: the lukewarm learnt from him, to be fervent in the service of God: the very libertines returned from him, with a desire of embracing a chaste and penitential life. For such was the gift he had of discerning spirits, that he seemed to read in the faces of all, the dispositions and state of their souls; and accordingly accommodated his instructions and prescriptions to the nature and quality of their maladies. Nor was this benefit confined to Egypt alone: but as the fame of Antony had reached all parts of the world; so men came from all parts of the world to see him; and no one visited him without fruit; no one ever complained that he had lost his labour in coming to him, how long or difficult soever his journey might have been.

The resort of people to him did not interrupt his attention to God in his interior; no more than his daily labours, which he sanctified with mental prayer. Oftentimes when he was walking, or sitting with his visiters, he was ravished out of himself, so as to remain for a long time insensible; at which time many secrets of heaven were revealed to him. Once in particular, he saw a vision in his extasy, by which was foretold two years before hand, the cruel havock that the Arians would make in the church of Alexandria: which, when he returned to himself, he related with many sighs and tears to those that were then with him; but then added for their comfort, that this storm should quickly blow over, and the church be restored to her former lustre. This persecution was raised against the church of Alexandria, when the Arians, having procured the banishment of St. Athanasius, intruded one Gregory, a man of their faction to be bishop in his place: upon which occasion Balacius, an Arian, the commander of the troops, particularly exerted himself in persecuting the faithful: insomuch that he ordered even the sacred virgins and the religious men to be publicly scourged, as if they had been the vilest malefactors. St. Antony wrote to him, to deter him from this cruelty: and his letter was to this effect. ‘I see the wrath of God coming upon thee: cease to persecute the Christians, lest that wrath take hold on thee, which already threatens thee with approaching destruction.’ The unhappy man slighted the warning of the Saint, and spitting upon the letter, flung it down upon the ground: then after having abused the persons that brought it; he bid them go, and tell Antony, that he should serve him also in the same manner, as he had done these monks, for whom he interested himself. But not many days passed, before the vengeance of God overtook the wretch; when, as he was riding out to a place in the neighbourhood, in the company of
of

of Nestorius the governor, one of his own horses, who was always before remarkably gentle and quiet, with a sudden bite brought him down to the ground, and standing over him gnawed and tore his thighs, in so terrible a manner, that he died within three days.

And now the time drawing near when Antony, being now about one hundred and five years of age, should exchange his mortal pilgrimage for a happy immortality; he went, according to his custom, to visit his brethren, that were in the nearer desert, signifying to them that his dissolution was at hand, and that this was the last time they should see him. These words drew tears from all their eyes: and they all embraced him as a parent just now departing from them into another world. They would have detained him with them, desiring to be present at his death; but this he would not consent to: but after having given them his last instructions; strongly exhorting them to fervour, and perseverance in their holy institute, and to constancy in the catholick faith; shewing a great joy that he was now shortly to go from this place of banishment to his true and everlasting home; he bid them his last farewell, and made haste back to his mountain. Here after some few months finding his death drawing near, he called to him his two disciples, (who for the last fifteen years of his life, had their cells in his neighbourhood) and said to them. ‘ My children, I am now going, according to the expression of the Scripture, the way of my fathers: for now the Lord calls for me: I long now to see the heavenly mansions. But as for you, my dearly beloved, I admonish you to beware lest you lose on a sudden the labour of so long a time. But every day consider yourselves as if you had but that day entered upon a religious life, and the strength of your purpose shall daily encrease. You know the various artifices of the devils: you have also seen their furious assaults; and how weak and

‘ cowardly they are. Have an ardent love for Jesus :
 ‘ let the faith of his name be strongly fixed in your
 ‘ minds : a strong faith in Jesus will put all the devils
 ‘ to flight. Remember also the lessons I have given
 ‘ you ; and the uncertain condition of this mortal
 ‘ life, which may be cut off any day : and make no
 ‘ doubt but the heavenly reward shall be given you.
 ‘ Avoid the poison of schismatics and hereticks, and
 ‘ follow my example in keeping them at a distance,
 ‘ because they are enemies of Christ. And ever make
 ‘ it your principal care to keep the commandments
 ‘ of the Lord : that so after your death the saints of
 ‘ God may receive you as their friends and acquaint-
 ‘ tance into the eternal tabernacles.’ He added as
 his last request to them that they should bury his
 body privately, and let no man know the place :
 lest the Egyptians, according to their custom, should
 take it up and embalm it, and keep it as they did
 their mummies. ‘ As to my garments, said he, give
 ‘ my sheep skin, and this old cloak, which I lie upon,
 ‘ to bishop Athanasius, who brought it me new :
 ‘ let bishop Serapion (another generous defender of
 ‘ the faith) have my other sheep skin : and keep my
 ‘ garment of haircloth for yourselves : and fare ye
 ‘ well my children : for Antony is going, and shall
 ‘ now be no longer with you in this world.

When he had made an end of speaking, as his
 disciples were kissing him, he drew up his feet a
 little, and met death with a joyful countenance
 (anno 356) breathing out his pure soul into the
 hands of the Angels, who were there ready to re-
 ceive him, and carry him to the happy regions of
 eternal bliss. His disciples buried him privately, as
 he had desired : and his legatee, says St. Athanasius
 (speaking of himself) ‘ who had the happiness to re-
 ‘ ceive by the orders of blessed Antony, his old cloak
 ‘ and his sheep skin, embraces Antony in his gifts :
 ‘ and as if he had been enriched by him with a large
 inheritance,

‘ inheritance, is rejoiced, by occasion of his garments,
 ‘ with having before the eyes of his soul the image of
 ‘ his sanctity.’ This same holy doctor of the church,
 and champion of the faith, wrote the life of St. An-
 tony, from his own knowledge of him, and from the
 testimonies of his disciples : (which life we have here
 abridged) which was then, and has been ever since,
 received, embraced, and admired, in all parts of
 the world, by all well-wishers to Christian piety, for
 the great lessons it contains. The share it had in
 bringing to a happy conclusion the conversion of the
 great St. Augustine, is too remarkable to be passed
 over in silence.

This Saint relates in his Confessions (L. 8. C. 6.)
 how, when he was as yet struggling under the load
 of his wicked habits, which he could not resolve
 effectually to cast off; he was visited one day by
 Pontitianus, one that belonged to the emperor’s
 court, but a good christian; who ‘ began a discourse,
 ‘ concerning Antony a monk of Egypt, whose name,
 ‘ says St. Augustine, speaking to God, was exceed-
 ‘ ingly illustrious amongst thy servants, but to that
 ‘ hour was unknown to us. Which he perceiving
 ‘ staid the longer upon that subject; informing us
 ‘ of the life of so great a man; and wondering that
 ‘ we had heard nothing of him. We were astonish-
 ‘ ed (he speaks of himself, and his friend Alipius)
 ‘ to hear of thy miracles so very well attested, done
 ‘ so lately, and almost in our own days, in the true
 ‘ faith, and in the Catholic church: and indeed all
 ‘ of us wondered: we that they were so great, and
 ‘ he that they were unknown to us. Thence he
 ‘ turned his discourse to the societies of monasteries,
 ‘ and to their manner of life, yielding a sweet odour
 ‘ to thee, and to the fruitful breasts of those barren
 ‘ deserts; of all which we had heard nothing: and
 ‘ yet there was at Milan, without the walls, a con-
 ‘ vent full of good brothers, under the care of Am-

‘ brose, and we knew it not. He proceeded in his
‘ discourse, whilst we in silence were attentive to
‘ him : and he related how upon a certain time,
‘ when the court was at Triers, and the emperor
‘ one afternoon was entertained with the sports of
‘ the *Circus* ; he and three others of his companions
‘ went out a walking among the gardens, near the
‘ walls of the city ; and there, as it happened, go-
‘ ing two and two together, one with him took one
‘ way, and the other two another : and that these
‘ two, as they were wandering about, lighted upon
‘ a certain cottage, where some servants of thine
‘ dwelt, *poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of hea-*
‘ *ven* (Matt. v.) and there they found a book, in
‘ which was written the life of Antony. This life
‘ one of them began to read, and to admire, and to
‘ be inflamed with it ; and as he was reading, to
‘ think of embracing this same kind of life, and of
‘ quitting his worldly office in the emperors court to
‘ become thy servant. Then suddenly being filled
‘ with a holy love, and a wholesome shame, and
‘ being angry at himself, he cast his eyes upon his
‘ friend, and said to him : “ Tell me, I pray thee,
“ with all these pains we take in the world, whither
“ would our ambition aspire to ? what do we seek ?
“ what is it we propose to ourselves in this employ-
“ ment ? can we even hope for any thing greater in
“ the court, than to arrive at the friendship and
“ favour of the emperor ? and there, what is there
“ that is not brittle and full of danger ? and through
“ how many dangers must we ascend to this greater
“ danger ? and how long will all this continue ?
“ But the friend and favorite of God, if I please, I
“ may become now presently ; and so forever.”
‘ He said this, and labouring in travail of a new
‘ life he returned his eyes to the pages, and read,
‘ and was changed where thou sawest, and his mind
‘ was stripped of the world, as soon appeared. For
‘ whilst

' whilst he was reading, and rowling to and fro the
 ' waves of his heart, he cast out some sighs and
 ' groans; and at length concluded and resolved up-
 ' on better things; and being now wholly thine, he
 ' said to his friend: " I have now entirely bid adieu
 " to that former hope of ours, and am fully resolved
 " upon being a servant of God: and upon begin-
 " ning from this hour, and in this place. If thou
 " art not willing to do the same, at least do not offer
 " to oppose my resolution. The other replied:
 " That he would stick by him, as a companion,
 " to serve with him so great a master, and for so
 " great a pay." By this time Pontitianus, and the
 ' other that was with him, seeking after them, came
 ' to the same place, and having found them, minded
 ' them of returning home, because the day was far
 ' spent. But they acquainting them with their pur-
 ' pose and determination; and in what manner they
 ' had taken this resolution, and were confirmed in it;
 ' requested of them, that if they pleased not to join
 ' with them, they would give them no disturbance.
 ' Whereupon they, being nothing altered from what
 ' they were before, bewailed themselves nevertheless,
 ' as he said, and piously congratulated with them,
 ' and recommended themselves to their prayers:
 ' and so with a heart weighed downwards towards
 ' the earth, returned to the palace; whilst the other
 ' two, with a heart elevated to heaven, continued
 ' in that cottage. And both of them were contrac-
 ' ted to young ladies, who as soon as they heard these
 ' things, consecrated in like manner their virginity
 ' to thee. These things Pontitianus related to us.
 So far St. Augustine, who declares in the following
 chapter, the wonderful operation this discourse had
 upon him: and how as soon as Pontitianus was gone,
 he set upon Alipius, and cried out, ' what is this
 ' we suffer? what is this thou hast been hearing?
 ' the unlearned rise up, and take heaven by force:

‘ and we with all our learning, without courage, or
‘ heart, see how we still wallow in flesh and blood.
‘ Are we ashamed to follow them, because they have
‘ got the start of us, and are gone before us? And ought
‘ we not to be more ashamed, if we do not so much as
‘ follow?’ With these words, he hurried himself away
into the garden; where after a strong conflict, he was
at length fully converted, by taking up, by the admo-
nition of a voice from heaven, the epistles of St.
Paul, and reading there the sentence that first occur-
red, Rom. xiii. 13, 14. *Not in rioting and drunkenness,
not in chambering and impurities, not in strife and envy;
but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not pro-
vision for the flesh in its concupiscences.*



S T. H I L A R I O N.

From his life written by St. Jerome.

HILARION was born at a village called Thabatha, five miles from the city of Gaza in Palestine, of infidel parents; who sent him, when he was very young, to study at Alexandria: where he gave proofs of an excellent genius for his age, and of good dispositions to virtue. Here he embraced the faith of Christ, and young as he was, could find no pleasure in theatrick shows, the incentives of lust, or any other worldly diversions, but only in frequenting the church, and in religious exercises. Hearing of the fame of St. Antony, he went into the desert to visit him; and putting off his secular habit, in order to embrace the same institute; he remained with him about two months: making it his business to observe well, and to learn the whole order and method of his life; his continual prayer, his humility, his charity, his mortification, and all his other virtues. Then returning into his own country, with some other religious men, and finding there that his parents were now dead, he distributed his whole substance, partly to his brethren, and partly to the poor; without reserving any thing at all for himself: bearing in his mind that saying of our Lord: *He that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple.* Luke xiv. 33. Thus stript of the world, and armed with Christ, being only in the sixteenth year of his age, he took a resolution to retire into the wilderness (which lies on the left hand of the road that leads from Gaza into Egypt) neither apprehending the dangers, which his worldly friends objected, from the robberies and murders, for which that place was infamous; but rather despising a temporal

poral death, that he might escape an eternal death; nor regarding the tenderness of his own complexion, very sensible both of cold, and heat, and other injuries of the weather; nor any of the hardships and austerities, that are incident to that kind of life, which he was going to undertake.

To the desert therefore he went, taking no other clothing with him than a sackcloth, or haircloth, with a leathern habit to wear over it, which St. Antony had given him, and a peasant's frock. Here he made himself a little hut, covered with sedges and rushes, to qualify the inclemency of the weather; which served him from the sixteenth to the twentieth year of his age: and then he built him a cell, which by the account of St. Jerome, who had seen it, was but four foot wide, and five foot high, (so that he could not stand upright in it) and in length but a little longer than his body; so that it seemed rather a tomb for a dead corpse, than a dwelling for a living man. His diet here was answerable to his lodging: for his whole food for the first years was but fifteen dry figs in the day, and that not till after sun set: afterwards from the twenty-first year of his age to the twenty-seventh, he took only about eight or ten ounces of lentiles, steeped in cold water; or a little dry bread, with salt and water: then for three or four years more, he lived upon nothing but the wild herbs, or roots of the shrubs of the wilderness: from the thirty-first year of his age till the thirty-fifth, he confined himself to six ounces of barley bread *per* day, and some pot-herbs without oil; which rule he continued to observe, to the sixty-third year of his age, only that in this latter time, he allowed himself a little oil with his herbs, but tasted nothing else, either of fruit, or of pulse, or of any other kind of food. From that time, as he now supposed, that by course of nature he could not have long to live, instead of relenting in his austerities, he redoubled them; so that

that from the sixty fourth year of his age, till his death, that is, till he was eighty years old, he totally abstained from bread, and took nothing at all in the four and twenty hours, but a kind of a mess made up of meal and herbs, which served him both for meat and drink; and this in so small a quantity, that his whole daily sustenance did not weigh above five ounces. Such was his austerity, as to his food, throughout all the different parts of his life: in all which he ever observed this constant rule, neither to eat, nor to drink, till after sunset, how weak soever his health might be; no not even on the greatest solemnities.

Hilarion had no sooner entered upon this course of life, in that vast and frightful desert, where no man before had ventured to dwell; imitating there the great model he had seen in his master Antony; and like him, applying himself continually to his God by prayer: when the devil, not bearing to see himself thus troden under foot by a young boy, began to assault him in a most violent manner with temptations of the flesh, filling his whole mind with impure imaginations, and inciting him, by sensual allurements, to carnal pleasures, of which before he had no notion. The chaste youth perfectly abhorred himself, when he found all these abominable motions of lust in his body and mind: he beat his breast, as if he meant by this outward violence to force away those lewd suggestions: he condemned himself to longer, and more rigorous fasts, and harder labour, saying to himself: ‘Thou little jack-ass, I will teach thee to kick: thou shalt have no corn; but only straw: I will bring thee down with hunger and thirst: I will lay a heavy burthen upon thee. I will make thee work both in the heats, and in the colds, that thou mayst think of thy meat, and not of wanton pleasures.’ And as he said, so he did; fasting sometimes for three or four days together, and then taking nothing for his meal but a little juice of herbs,
and

and a few figs; praying and singing psalms very often; and working at the same time, either in digging, or in making baskets, till by these exercises he had reduced his body to mere skin and bones. Wherefore the enemy not prevailing this way, began to be troublesome to him, with phantastic apparitions and other temptations. One night he was on a sudden surpris'd with hearing the crying as it were of children, the bleating of sheep, the bellowing of oxen, the lamentations of women, the roaring of lions, and the confused noise of an army of barbarians, with strange and frightful voices: which he understanding to be nothing but diabolical illusions, armed himself against them with the sign of the cross, and a lively faith, and cast himself down upon the ground, to be better able to encounter this proud enemy, in this humble posture. Then looking forward, it being a clear moon light night, he perceived, as it were a coach, drawn on by furious horses, coming violently towards him: at this sight he called upon the name of Jesus, and suddenly the whole phantastic scene sunk down into the earth, before his eyes: upon which he sung forth the praises of his deliverer. At many other times, both by day and night, this unwearied enemy sought divers ways to molest him; either by representing to him naked figures, to excite him to concupiscence; or by seeking to interrupt his devotion, or distract him in his prayers, by a variety of either comical or tragical scenes: but none of these, or any other of his attempts were capable of shaking the resolution of the servant of God, or hindring him from his perpetual application to the love and service of his maker. One day, as he was praying, with his head fixed on the ground, he happened to be distracted with some other thoughts: when behold the watchful enemy, taking advantage of this distraction, jumped upon his back, as if he would ride upon him; and whipping and spur-

spurring him, cried out to him ‘so ho! so ho! come gallop: what art thou asleep? Ha ha! thou art faint: come shall I give thee some provender?’ But this like the rest of his vain efforts, only served to make the Saint more vigilant and fervent.

When he was about eighteen years old, the robbers that frequented that desert, took it in their heads to make him a visit; either expecting to find something in his hut, to take away, or looking upon it, as a slight, that a single boy should venture to live alone in their dominions, and not be afraid of them. They began therefore their search after him in the evening, and continued it till the sun-rising, without being able to light upon his lodging: but in the day, they met with him, and asked him, as it were, in jest, ‘what he would do if the robbers should come to him? O, said he, he that has nothing to lose fears no robbers. But, said they, they may kill thee. True, said he, but I dont fear death; and therefore I dont fear them, because I am prepared to die.’ They were amazed at his constancy and faith, and acknowledged to him, how they had sought him all the night, and how they had been blinded, so that they could not find him: and so much were they affected with his words, that they promised to amend their lives.

Hilarion had spent two and twenty years in the wilderness, in perfect solitude, conversing only with God and his Angels; and only known to the world, by the fame of his sanctity, (which was spread over all Palestine) when a certain woman of the city of Eleutheropolis, who had lived fifteen years in the state of wedlock, without bearing a child, finding herself despised by her husband, by reason of her barrenness, ventured to break in upon his solitude; and coming unexpectedly upon him, cast her self upon her knees before him, saying: ‘Pardon my boldness: excuse my distress: why do you turn
‘ away

‘ away your eyes from me ? Why do you flee from
‘ your petitioner ? Do not look at me as a woman ;
‘ but as one in distress. Remember that a woman
‘ brought fourth our Saviour. They that are well
‘ stand not in need of a physician ; but they that are
‘ ill.’ At these words he stood still ; and having
learnt of the woman (which was the first he had seen
since his retiring into the desert) the cause of her
coming, and of her grief ; he lifted up his eyes to
heaven, and bid her be of good heart ; and so sent
her away ; weeping for her. And behold within a
twelve month she returned to visit him, bringing
with her a son. This was his first miracle, which
was followed by a greater : when Aristeneta the wife
of Elpidius a Christian nobleman (who was after-
wards advanced to one of the chiefest posts in the em-
pire) returning from Egypt, where she had been,
with her husband and her three sons, to see St. An-
tony, was stopped at Gaza by the illness of her
children : who were all three, by a semitertian fever,
brought so low, that they were despaired of by the
physicians. The disconsolate mother hearing of the
sanctity of Hilarion, whose wilderness was not far off
from Gaza, went in haste to visit him, accompa-
nied with some of her servants, and thus addressed
herself to him : ‘ I beg of thee for God’s sake ; for
‘ the sake of Jesus our most merciful God ; through
‘ his cross and his blood ; that thou come and restore
‘ to me my three sons ; that the name of the Lord
‘ our Saviour may be glorified in that pagan city :
‘ and that his servant may come into Gaza, and Mar-
‘ nas (the idol which they worship there) may fall
‘ to the ground.’ The man of God excused himself,
alleging that he never went out of his cell not so
much as into any village, much less into any city :
but she casting herself down upon the ground, ceased
not to importune him with many tears ; often cry-
ing out : ‘ O Hilarion servant of God, restore me
‘ my

‘ my fons: Antony laid his hands upon them in Egypt; do thou save their lives here in Syria:’ till at length she obliged him to promise her, that he would come to Gaza after sunset. As soon as he came to their lodgings, and saw them there lying in their beds in burning fevers, and void of sense, he called upon our Lord Jesus, and immediately a plentiful sweat, as from three fountains, followed his prayer: and that same hour they took their meat; and knowing their mournful mother, and blessing God, they kissed the hands of the Saint.

No sooner was this miracle published abroad but great numbers of people, both of Syria and of Egypt, began to resort to him: and many infidels by his means were brought over to the faith of Christ: many also by his example embraced a monastick life: for before his time there were no monks nor monasteries in Palestine or Syria; he was the father and the founder; he was the first teacher of the monastic institute, in those provinces. And now he began to have with him many disciples, whom he trained up to religious perfection: and who were witnesses of the wonderful miracles that God wrought by him. St. Jerome, as one perfectly well informed, has recorded several of the most remarkable, with all their circumstances. A woman of the neighbourhood of Rhinocorura (a city on the confines of Egypt) who had been blind for ten years, was brought to the Saint to be healed: she told him she had spent her whole substance on physicians: you had done better, said he, if you had given it to the poor, and Jesus Christ the true physician would have healed you. She earnestly begged that he would have pity on her: and he with spitting on her eyes restored her to her sight. A charioteer of Gaza was also brought to him on his bed, struck in such a manner by the devil, that he could not stir any of his limbs, but only his tongue, with which he besought the
servant

servant of God to heal him. The Saint told him, that if he desired to be healed, he must believe in Jesus Christ, and promise to renounce that profession of his, which exposed him to the immediate occasion of sin. He agreed to the conditions, and was cured; and returned home rejoicing more for the health of his soul, than for that of his body.

Marfitas a young man of the territory of Jerusalem, of an extraordinary bulk and strength, who was possessed by a most wicked spirit, and had done much mischief to many, was dragged by ropes, to the cell of the servant of God, like a mad bull bound in chains. The brethren were afrighted at the very sight of him: but the Saint bid the people bring him up, and let him loose: which when they had done, he commanded him to bow down his head, and come to him. The poor man began to tremble, and bend his neck, and laying aside all his fierceness, falling down, licked the feet of the man of God: and after seven days exorcisms was entirely delivered. Another man, named Orion, a principal citizen of Aila, a city near the Red sea, was possessed by a whole legion of devils; and was brought in like manner, loaded with chains, to the Saint; who happened at that time to be walking with his disciples, and interpreting to them some passages of the Scripture: when behold the possessed man broke loose from them that held him, and running up to the man of God, whose back was turned towards him, lifted him up from the ground on high in his arms: at which when all that were present cried out, apprehending that he would do some mischief to the Saint: he smiled and said: 'Let me alone, to wrestle with my antagonist.' [Then putting back his hand he laid hold on the hair of Orion, and brought him before his feet; and kept him down there howling, and turning back his neck, so as to touch the ground with the top of his head. Then praying
he

he said : ' O Lord Jesus, I am a poor wretch : do
' thou release this captive : thou canst as easily
' overcome many as one.' All were astonished to
hear on this occasion many different voices from the
mouth of the possessed person, and a confused out-
cry as of a whole people : but all this multitude
of wicked spirits was forced out by the prayers of
the humble servant of God. The man not long af-
ter came with his wife and children to return thanks
to the Saint, and brought him large presents, by way
of gratification ; which he absolutely refused to ac-
cept of. And when he weeping besought him to
take at least what he had brought, and to give it to
the poor, he answered ; ' thou canst better distribute
' thyself what thou wouldst have to be given to the
' poor : for thou frequentest cities, and knowest the
' poor : why should I, who have left my own, covet
' the goods of others ? Many have been imposed
' upon by avarice, under the name of the poor.
' Don't make thyself uneasy : it is for both thy sake
' and mine, I refuse thy presents : for if I should ac-
' cept of them, I should offend God, and the legion
' of devils would return to thee.'

One Italicus, a Christian of Maiuma, the haven of
Gaza, who bred horses for the public races, that
were to be exhibited at Gaza, came to the Saint to
beg his prayers, against the enchantments, by which
his pagan antagonist, one of the magistrates of the
city, had bewitched his horses. Hilarion, who dis-
liked all these public games, was unwilling to em-
ploy his prayer for any such vain occasion. But the
other representing to him, that it was not by his
own choice, but by his office, he was obliged to
do what he did : and that the honour of God ; and
of religion was here at stake, because the men of
Gaza, who for the most part were infidels, would
take occasion, from his being worsted, to insult,
not so much over him, as over the church of Christ ;
the Saint, at the request of the brethren, ordered
E his

his earthen pot, in which he used to drink, to be filled with water, and to be given to him. Italicus took the water, and with it sprinkled his stable, his horses, his chariot, and his drivers, in the sight of the pagans, who made a jest of it : whilst the Christians, confiding in the prayers of the Saint, made no doubt of success. Wherefore as soon as the sign was given, the horses of Italicus sprung forth with incredible speed, whilst those of his adversary were presently distanced, and could scarce keep sight of them, that were gone before. Upon this a loud cry of all the people was immediately raised : and even the very adversaries cried out that *Marnas the god of Gaza was worsted by Christ*. This miracle gave occasion to the conversion of many.

There was also in the same town of Maiuma, a virgin dedicated to God, whom a young man in the neighbourhood was vehemently in love with. Who after having employed, without success, flattering speeches, idle jokes and other freedoms, which too often pave the way to greater crimes ; went to Memphis in Egypt, to seek a remedy for his wound from the priests of Esculapius. They furnished him with certain magical spells, and monstrous figures, graven upon a plate of copper, which he buried under the threshold of the house where the maid dwelt : when behold immediately (in punishment of her having laid herself too open to the enemy, by not flying, as she ought, or not resisting former freedoms) the maid run mad with love ; tearing off her head-cloaths, whirling about her hair, gnashing with her teeth, and perpetually calling upon the name of the youngman. Her parents therefore took her to St. Hilarion : when presently it appeared how the case stood with her : for the devil began to howl within her, and to cry out : ‘ I was forced in hither : I ‘ was brought from Memphis against my will : ‘ there I succeeded well, in deluding men with dreams.

But

‘ But, Oh what torments thou makest me suffer here !
‘ Thou compellest me to go out : and behold I am
‘ bound fast, and kept in by the thread, and the
‘ plate, that lies under the threshold. I can not go
‘ out, till the young man, who keeps me here, lets me
‘ go.’ ‘ Thou art very strong indeed, said the Saint,
‘ if thou art held by a thread, and a plate. But tell
‘ me, how didst thou dare to enter into a maid, de-
‘ dicated to God ? It was, said he, to preserve her
‘ virginity. What ? Thou preserve her virginity,
‘ said the Saint, who art the mortal enemy of chas-
‘ tity. Why didst thou not rather enter into him
‘ that sent thee ! O, said the devil there was no oc-
‘ casion for my entring into him, who was already
‘ possessed, by my comrade, the demon of wanton
‘ love.’ The Saint would hear no more, nor send
for the young man, nor order the things mentioned
to be taken away ; to shew the little regard, that is
to be had to the devils speeches or signs : but pre-
sently delivered the maid from her wicked guest ;
and sent her away perfectly cured ; after severely re-
prehending her for admitting of those liberties, which
had given the devil the power to enter into her.

It would be endless to recount all the other mi-
racles, that God wrought by this Saint : which ren-
dered his name illustrious, even in the remotest pro-
vinces. St. Antony himself, hearing of his life and
conversation, wrote to him, and gladly received
letters from him : and when any diseased came to
him, for their cure, from any part of Syria ; he
blamed them for giving themselves the trouble to
come so far ; since you have, said he, in those parts
my son Hilarion. His bright example attracted
great numbers to the service of God ; so that now
there were innumerable monasteries, or cells of reli-
gious, throughout Palestine ; and all looked upon him
as their father, and resorted to him for their direc-
tion. He exhorted them all to attend to their spi-

ritual progress: ever inculcating to them, 'that the figure of this world passeth away; and that, that only is true life, which is purchased, by parting with the pleasures and affections of this life.' Once a year he visited all their monasteries, for their instruction and edification: and such was his diligence, and charity on these occasions, that he would not pass by the cell of any one of the least, or meanest of the brethren: insomuch that he went as far as the desert of Kadesh, on purpose to visit one single monk, who had a cell there. In this journey, he came, accompanied with a great number of his disciples, into the city of Elusa, in the confines of the Saracens, on a festival day, in which the people were all assembled into the temple of Venus; worshipped there by the Saracens, by reason of the star that bears her name. Now the people no sooner heard that Hilarion was passing through the town (of whose sanctity and miracles they had been informed by fame; the more because he had also delivered several of their nation from evil spirits) but all of them, men, women and children, run out in crowds to meet him, and to beg his blessing. The Saint received them all with great tenderness, and humility; and begged of them that they would worship the living God, rather than stocks and stones: shedding at the same time many tears, and looking up to heaven; and promising, if they would believe in Christ, that he would often come to see them. And so wonderful a grace accompanied the words and prayer of the man of God, that they would not suffer him to leave their town, till he had marked out for them a place for the building of a church, and their very priest had received the sign of the cross of Christ, in order to his baptism.

Another year, when the Saint made his visitation a little before the time of the vintage, he came with all his company to the monastery of one of the brethren,

thren, who was noted for being niggardly and miserable. This man had a vineyard ; and apprehending lest the multitude of the monks, that accompanied the Saint should eat up his grapes, he had set men to keep them off with stones and clods, and slings ; and would not so much as let them taste of them. The servant of God smiled at the treatment they met with ; but took no notice of it to the niggard : but went on the next day to another monastery ; where he and all his company were received by a monk, whose name was Sabas : who invited them all (it being the Lord's-day) to go, and feast themselves in his vineyard. The Saint ordered that they should first take the food of their souls, by applying themselves to their religious exercises of prayer, and of singing psalms, and paying their duty to God : and then after giving his blessing to the vineyard, he sent in the whole multitude of his disciples to take their corporal refection. The blessing of the man of God was followed with so miraculous an effect, that whereas the vineyard before was not thought capable of yielding more than a hundred gallons of wine, it yielded that year three hundred. Whilst the vineyard of the niggard yielded much less than usual ; and the little that it yielded turned into vinegar ; a circumstance, which the man of God had foretold. He could not endure in religious men any thing that looked like covetousness, or too much affection to any of those things, that pass away with this short-lived world : and he had a gift from God, that he could discover, who were addicted to this, or to any other vice, by the stench that proceeded from their bodies, or their garments.

And now the Saint, seeing that his hermitage was turned into a great monastery ; and that the wilderness about him was continually crowded with the people that resorted thither, bringing to him their diseased, or such as were possessed with unclean spirits ; and

that not only the common sort of people, from all the neighbouring provinces, but also the gentry, and ladies of the first rank, the clerks and the monks, the priests and the bishops, were daily visiting him, and interrupting his devotions: he regretted very much the loss of his former solitude; and was perpetually lamenting and weeping, that now, as he said, he was returned back into the world: that he apprehended lest he should have his reward in this life; because all Palestine and the neighbouring provinces took him to be some body, &c. nor did he cease mourning and bewailing himself, till he took a fixed resolution to quit his monastery, and to retire into some place, where he might not be known, and might more freely enjoy his God, without the interruption of so many visits. In the mean time, whilst he was meditating upon his flight, the lady Aristeneta (whose three sons he had cured) came to see him; acquainting him also with her design of going into Egypt, to make a second visit to St. Antony. He told her, with tears in his eyes, that he could have wished to have taken the same journey, if he were not kept prisoner in his monastery; but that it was now too late to find Antony alive: for, said he, two days ago, the world was deprived of so great a father. She believed him, and did not proceed in her journey, and, behold, after some days the news was brought from Egypt of his death. When it was known abroad, that the man of God was upon the point of leaving Palestine, the whole province took the alarm; and no fewer than ten thousand people, of all degrees and conditions, were gathered together, in order to stop and detain him. But his resolution was not to be altered: and as he had learnt by revelation the havock that the infidels of Gaza were about to make in his monastery, and all that neighbourhood, under the reign of Julian the Apostate, he gave them broad hints of this his foreknowledge:

knowledge: saying that he could not call in question the truth of what God had said; nor could he endure to see the churches destroyed, the altars of Christ troden under foot, and his children massacred. In short, he assured them, he would neither eat nor drink, till they let him go. And thus, after he had fasted seven days, they were contented at last to suffer him to depart, accompanied with about forty of his monks. With these he made the best of his way to Pelusium (now called Damietta) in Egypt; and after visiting the holy solitaires, who lived in the neighbouring deserts, he waited upon Dracontius and Philo, two illustrious confessors of Christ, of the number of those catholic prelates, who had been banished from their sees, by the fury of the Arians, under the emperor Constantius. After these visits, he hastened, to keep the anniversary day of the happy decease of St. Antony, in the place where he died: and being conducted by the deacon Baifanes, upon dromedaries, three days journey, thro' that vast and dreadful wilderness, he arrived at length at the mountain of the Saint. Here he found his two disciples, who shewed him all the places, where their master had been accustomed to sing psalms, to pray, to work, to sit down, after being wearied with his labour; as also the garden he had made, the trees he had planted, the instrument with which he had dug the earth, his private cells, to which he often retired, towards the top of the mountain, &c. and they agreeably entertained him, with divers particulars of the acts of the latter part of St. Antony's life. Hilarion was much moved to devotion with the seeing and hearing of all this; and after watching in prayer the whole night of the anniversary of the Saint, he returned the way that he came, through that dismal wilderness to the neighbourhood of the town called Aphroditon. Here in an adjoining desert, with two of his disciples, whom he kept with him, he led a life of so much

abstinence, abstraction and silence, that he seemed to himself never to have before begun to serve Christ in earnest, in comparison with the fervour he now found in himself.

He had been about two years in this wilderness, when the fame of his sanctity brought the people of all the neighbouring country to him, to beg his prayers for rain. For from the time of the death of St. Antony, no rain had fallen upon their land, for the space of three whole years: so that being afflicted with a great famine, they resorted to him, whom they considered as the successor of St. Antony, for a redress of their misery. He was moved to pity, by the sight of their distress, and lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, to pray for them, and his prayer was immediately followed with plentiful rains. And as these rains, whilst they brought fertility to the earth, in falling on that dry hot sand, had also produced an incredible multitude of venomous reptils and insects, with which innumerable persons were struck; they were forced to have again recourse to the Saint, who gave them some oil, which he had blessed, with which they were all cured. But now finding himself after these miracles, greatly honoured in this place, he would stay no longer there, but departed, in order to go and hide himself in the desert of Oasis. In his way he passed through Alexandria; and as he made it his rule, never to lodge in any city, he went on, to a place in the neighbourhood, called Bruchium, where there was a monastery of servants of God. From hence, when night drew on, he hastened away, telling the brethren, who were greatly afflicted at his sudden departure, that they should soon know the reason of it. Accordingly, on the next day, their monastery was searched by the Gazites, accompanied with officers and sergeants, sent from the governor of Alexandria to apprehend Hilarion; of whose arrival there they had received intelligence.

For

For the infidels of Gaza, who bore a mortal hatred to the Saint, as soon as Julian came to the empire, destroyed his monastery, and obtained an edict from the tyrant, that both he, and his disciple Hefychius, should be sought for, and put to death, where-ever they were found. Of this the Saint had a knowledge by prophetic light, and thereupon withdrew himself, so that these infidels, who had thought themselves now sure of getting him into their hands, finding that he was gone, went away, saying to one another, that now they were sure he was a magician, and had a foreknowledge of things to come.

He had not been a year in the wilderness of Oasis, before he found that fame had followed him thither also : and therefore now not hoping to be able to lie concealed upon the continent, he took a resolution to seek out a place where he might hide himself, in some of the islands of the Mediterranean. In order to this he took shipping, with one only disciple at Paretonium, a haven on the coast of Lybia, in a vessel bound for Sicily : hoping that henceforward no one should know him, or be troublesome to him. When, behold, in the midst of the voyage the son of the master of the ship, or rather the devil by his mouth, cried out : ‘ Hilarion thou servant of God, let me alone, at least till we come to land, what is the meaning that even at sea, thou art still persecuting us.’ The Saint would have disguised the grace, which God had given him, fearing lest the sailors and passengers should publish his fame, when they came to land ; and therefore mildly replied : ‘ If my God permits thee to stay ; stay if thou wilt. But if he casts thee out, what hast thou to do to complain of me, who am but a poor beggar and a sinful man.’ However, upon the solemn promise of the father, and of all the rest, that they would not discover him, he cast the devil out of the boy. When they arrived at Pachynum, (now Capo Passaro)

faro) he would have paid for the passage of himself and his companion, by giving the captain the book of the gospels, which was all his wealth; but he seeing their poverty, would not receive it. Wherefore the Saint leaving the-sea coast, withdrew himself into a little kind of a wilderness, about twenty miles within the land, and there fixed his abode: living upon what little he could get, by making up faggots, which his companion carried to a neighbouring village, bringing from thence in exchange, what they stood in need of for their food.

But the Saint could not long lie concealed here. For soon after his arrival, a man possessed with an evil spirit being under the exorcisms of the church, at St. Peters in Rome, the devil cried out by his mouth: 'Hilarion the servant of Christ is some days since come into Sicily, where no man knows him, and he thinks himself secret: but I will go and discover him.' This man therefore taking some of his servants with him, and going a ship board, sailed immediately into Sicily, and after coming to shore, being conducted by the devil, he went strait to the hut of the servant of God, and there cast himself down at his feet: upon which he was presently cured. This being noised abroad, great numbers resorted to him, who laboured under various diseases, to seek of him their corporal cure; whilst a multitude also of devout and religious people applied to him for their spiritual profit. Amongst the rest he cured upon the spot one of the principal men of the island, who was swelled up with a dropsy; so that on the same day he returned home in perfect health. This man would have made him considerable presents: which the Saint absolutely refused, alledging that precept of our Saviour Matt. x. 8. *freely have you received, freely give.* And this in general he observed, in all the other innumerable miracles which he wrought, whether in Sicily, or elsewhere, that he never would
receive

receive any thing, no not so much as a morsel of bread, from any one of those upon whom he had wrought those miracles.

And now his beloved disciple Hefychius, after having sought after him in vain in many different regions, came to Sicily, upon the report he had heard at Modon in Greece, from a Jewish pedlar, lately come from thence, that a Christian prophet had appeared in Sicily, who wrought all kind of wonders and miracles. He had no sooner found his master, but he understood, that he wanted to be gone from Sicily, into some strange country, where he might be utterly unknown. Wherefore in compliance with his desire, he conveyed him away by ship to the coast of Dalmatia; where for a little while, he led a solitary life, not far from the city of Epidaurus, now called Ragusa. But neither here could he lie concealed: his miracles every where betraying him. There was at that time, in the neighbourhood of Epidaurus, a monstrous serpent, of that kind which they call *boas*; which did great mischief, in destroying both men and cattle. The Saint, to put a stop to this calamity, ordered the country people to heap up a pile of wood; and after making his prayer to Christ, he went, and called the serpent out of his den, and commanded him to go up on the pile of wood, and then setting fire to it, he burnt the monstrous beast in the sight of all the people. This miracle was followed by a greater: For about this same time happened that great earthquake, so noted in history (in the second year of the reign of Valentinian the first) the like of which, says Ammianus a co-temporary historian, l. xxvi. neither true history, nor even fables have ever given an account of. On this occasion the swelling seas in many places broke in, and overflowed the land, in such a manner, as to threaten the earth with a second deluge: and in some places they run so high, as to carry the ships
along

along with them, and leave them hanging on the cliffs. The Epidaurians seeing the danger they were in, of their city being destroyed, as many others were at this time, had recourse to Hilarion; and opposed him to the mountains of water that were just upon the point of overwhelming them. He made three crosses on the sand, and lifted up his arms against the swelling waves: and though they raged and foamed, and rose up to an incredible height; they were not able to advance, but by degrees turned back again and subsided. This wonder, says St. Jerome, who was then a young boy in that same province, both the city of Epidaurus, and all that country recounts to this day; and the mothers teach it to their children, in order to transmit the memory of it to posterity.

The applause that followed these miracles would not suffer the humble servant of Christ to stay any longer in Dalmatia: but taking boat privately by night, he fled away, and within two day found a ship going to Cyprus, on which he embarked. In this voyage his ship was pursued by pirates in two light vessels, and there appeared no means of escaping them. When all the ship's crew being in the utmost consternation; the Saint turning to his disciples said, why are you afraid, O ye of little faith? And when the pirates were now come within a stone's cast of the Ship, he stood on the foredeck, and stretching out his hand to them, he said: '*You have come far enough.*' And behold immediately their vessels fell back; and the more they tugged and rowed, in order to push forward towards their hoped for prey, the more swiftly they were carried away from it. The Saint landed at Paphos, a noted city of Cyprus; and chose himself a dwelling-place, about two miles from thence: being now wonderfully pleased, that he had found rest for a little time at least in this solitude. But scarce twenty days were passed,

passed, when in different parts of the island, the devils published his arrival, by the mouths of them that were possessed : and many of these poor people, both men and women, hastened to him, and were delivered. Here he remained about two years ; but meditating all the while upon some more private retiring place. In the mean time he sent Hesychius into Palestine, to salute the brethren there, and to visit the ashes of his monastery : and upon his return he proposed to him, that they should sail into Egypt ; and go up a great way into the country, to some place inhabited only by pagans. But Hesychius opposed this ; and after a long search, found him out a place in the island, about twelve miles off from the sea, amongst mountains and woods, that were hardly passable ; which proved quite to his mind. In this solitude, to which there was no access, in several places, but by creeping on hands and knees, they found springs of water on the sides of the hills, and a little garden within, and several fruit-trees, of which however, the Saint would never eat ; and near to the garden, the ruins of an ancient temple, from whence, as both he and his disciples related, were often heard, both night and day, great noises like the voices of a whole army of devils. In this place the man of God abode, for the last five years of his mortal life, seldom visited by any one but Hesychius ; because of the difficulty there was to come at his dwelling ; as also because the people were persuaded that the neighbourhood was haunted with a multitude of hobgoblins. However some there were that ventured to come to him, for the cure of their maladies ; their necessity overcoming all the difficulties ; especially after it was known, that he had cured upon the spot the baily of the place, of a palsy, which had taken away the use of all his limbs, by stretching out his hand to him, and lifting him up with these words :

words : *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ rise up and walk.*

And now the time was come, which was to put an end to all the labours of his mortal pilgrimage, and to unite him eternally to his God: when he being now eighty years old, was taken with his last illness, Hesychius was absent; to whom nevertheless by will he bequeathed all he had, *viz.* his book of the gospel, his sack-cloth, cowl, and habit. Many religious men from Paphos came to attend him in his sickness; who had heard of his having said, that he was now going to our Lord: and with them a holy woman named Constantia, whose daughter and son-in-law he had delivered from death, by anointing them with oil. And now he was drawing near his end, when in the very agony of death, he distinctly spoke these words: ‘Go forth my soul: what art thou afraid of? Go forth, why art thou at a stand? Thou hast almost seventy years served Christ, and art thou afraid to die?’ And with these words he gave up the ghost. He was immediately buried, as he had desired, in the same place; where the devout lady Constantia, frequently passed whole nights in prayer at his sepulchre, speaking with him as if he were alive, and desiring the assistance of his prayers. His disciple Hesychius, after ten months, privately conveyed his body away to Palestine; where it was solemnly interred in his own monastery: at which time it was found entirely incorrupt, and sending forth a most fragrant odour. And many great miracles were daily wrought, even to the time when St. Jerome published this life, as well at his sepulchre in Palestine, as at the place where he was first buried in Cyprus.

S T. M A L C H U S.

Abridged from St. Jerome.

WHILST St. Jerome in his younger days made some stay at Maronia, a village of Syria, about thirty miles distant from Antioch, he learnt that there dwelt in that neighbourhood a religious man, now advanced in years, whose name was Malchus; and near him a decrepitate old woman; both of them eminent servants of God; constant in the church, and wholly addicted to the exercises of religion. Of these the neighbours published wonderful things; and extolled to the skies their sanctity; which gave occasion to St. Jerome, in order to his own edification, to visit that holy man, and to learn from his own mouth the particulars of his history; which afterwards he published to the world, in a small book, of which the following is an abstract.

Malchus was a native of the territory of Nisibis, a city of Mesopotamia, upon the confines of the Roman and Persian empires. As he was the only child of his parents, they looked upon him as the heir and support of their family, and therefore, when he was grown up, they pressed him to marry. He shewed himself quite averse to this state of life, declaring to them his desire of entering into religion, and of wholly dedicating himself to God. And as they ceased not still to importune him, both with flatteries and threats, to part with the treasure of his virginal purity, which he valued above all the possessions of the world; in order to rid himself of their importunities, and to secure his treasure, he took a resolution to withdraw himself for good and all from house and home, parents and country. Accordingly taking a little matter with him for his journey, he

he travelled westward; till at length he arrived at the defart of Chalcis in Syria. He found here some servants of God, leading a monastical life; and he put himself under their direction; following the same institute as they did; living by the labour of his hands, and restraining the rebellions of the flesh by rigorous fastings. This course of life, which he had happily begun, he continued for many years: till the common enemy, envying the progress he made in all virtue, suggested to him, under specious pretexts, to leave the monastery, and to return to his own country; to see if his mother were yet alive (for he had heard of his fathers death) and if she were, to comfort her in her widowhood; and then after her decease, to sell the estate; to distribute part of the money to the poor, to employ another part in building a monastery, and to reserve what remained for his own uses; a design which he afterwards lamented, as a grievous transgression and infidelity to his religious engagements.

His abbot was no sooner informed of his purposes, but he remonstrated to him, in the strongest terms, that the whole was a temptation of the devil; who by such plausible pretences as these had oftentimes imposed upon religious men, and drawn them back again into the world; alledging also divers examples from the Scriptures, of the wicked wiles and impostures of this old serpent. And when he saw that his remonstrances were not hearkened to, he even cast himself down upon his knees, and earnestly entreated his disciple not to abandon him; not to fling himself away, and not to look back after setting his hand to the plow. But all was in vain: Malchus imagined that his superior in seeking to detain him, had an eye to his own comfort and satisfaction, more than to his advantage: and therefore he would not be diverted from his design. When he set out upon his journey, his abbot followed him out of the monastery,

monastery, bewailing him, as if he had been following his corpse to the grave; and at his last parting told him plainly that the sheep, which had left the fold, must look for nothing but to fall immediately a prey to the wolves.

In his journey, he was to go from Beroea to Edeffa, by a road, which borders upon a vast wilderness, much infested by parties of the Saracens, or Arabians, who robbed, or carried off all they met with. This obliged the travellers, who went that way, to go in great companies for their mutual defence: and so it happened, at this time, that there were no fewer in company with Malchus, than about three-score and ten persons, young and old, men and women. But this precaution could not secure the fugitive, who was running away from his Lord, from being overtaken by him; and from meeting with captivity and slavery, instead of the possessions to which he imagined himself returning. For behold on a sudden, a party of armed Saracens, some on horseback, others upon camels, rushed upon them, and made them an easy prey; and then by lot divided their captives amongst them. It was Malchus's lot to fall into the hands of the same master, with a married woman, one of the company, whose husband fell to the lot of another. And both he, and the rest of the prisoners, now slaves, being set upon camels, were carried for many days through an immense wilderness, living in the mean time upon meat half raw, and camels milk; till having passed over a great river, they came into the heart of the country. Here Malchus and his fellow captive were brought in, and presented to their master's wife, and obliged, according to the manner of the nation, to prostrate themselves to do reverence to their new mistress and to her children. And now instead of his monastic habit, or any other clothing, Malchus is obliged to go naked, as well by his con-

dition of a slave, as by the violent heat of the sun, beating on those Arabian sands, which would not suffer him to wear any other covering than what modesty indispensably required. His office was to tend his masters sheep in the wilderness: in which it was his comfort, that he was generally alone, seldom seeing either his master, or any of his fellow-servants. He pleased himself also with the thought that in his way of life, he resembled some of the ancient Saints, who had in like manner fed sheep in the wilderness. In the mean time, his whole diet was new cheese and milk: and his whole employment continual prayer, and singing of the psalms, which he had learnt by heart in the monastery. He was now delighted with his captivity: and he gave thanks to God, for the wonderful dispositions of his merciful judgments, in bringing him to find the monk again in the land of his slavery, whom he was going to lose forever in his own country.

The devil, who could not endure to see the great advantages our captive made of his present condition, by the help of his solitude, recollection, and continual prayer, contrived after some time a dangerous stratagem, for the robbing him at once both of his chastity, and of all his other virtues; which he sought to bring about in this manner. The Saracen, who found that his flock increased in the hands of Malchus, and that he served him honestly and faithfully, took it in his head (no doubt by the suggestion of this enemy) to reward him, as it were, and to fix him in his service, by giving him for a wife, that same married woman, who was taken captive with him. This he proposed to him, as a kindness and a favour, which he was desirous to do him. And when Malchus replied, that this could not be, because he was a Christian, and therefore could not by the law of his God, marry a woman, whose husband was yet alive: the barbarian in a rage drew his sword,
and

and would have presently killed him upon the spot, if he had not made haste to take his fellow captive by the arm; which his master took for a token of his consent to the marriage. When night was come, they went together, both of them with a heavy heart, to the ruinous cave, which served Malchus for lodging; though neither of them knew the dispositions of the other. And here Malchus casting himself upon the ground, grievously lamented his wretched case; that after having in his younger days left all his worldly pretensions, together with his country, his parents, and his estate, purely to preserve his virginity, he should in a more advanced age, lose it after all, and that in so illegal, and wicked a manner: withal accusing himself of his sins, especially of his crime, in leaving his monastery, to return to his own country; to which he imputed his being now caught in this labyrinth, out of which he knew not how to extricate himself, but by death: and this he was strongly inclined to choose, as the only means, as he thought, to preserve his virtue. Here his fellow captive, perceiving the great trouble and agitation of mind which he lay under, and hearing him talk of making himself *a martyr of chastity*, cast herself at his feet, and begged of him for Jesus Christ's sake, not to think of doing himself any harm: that for her part, she abhorred the proposed marriage as much as he, and would rather choose to die, than consent to any unchastity: but why might not they live together, as brother and sister, in perfect purity; whilst their master and mistress took them for man and wife? These words calmed the soul of Malchus, and made him esteem and admire the virtue of the woman, and love her the more; but according to God, and with a holy friendship, that was cemented together with heavenly charity.

Pursuant to this proposal, they lived a long time together in perfect chastity of mind and body; and

were loved by their master and mistress; who had not the least suspicion, either of their not being married, or of any danger of their making their escape: so that Malchus was used to be sometimes absent with his flock, for a whole month together, at a great distance from his master's house, in the wide wilderness. Here one day, as he was sitting all alone, he began to consider the great advantages for a spiritual life, that are found in well ordered religious communities; remembring in particular the helps and directions he had received from the good abbot, his ghostly father, and regretting his leaving him: when behold, in the midst of his meditation, he perceives at a little distance, a hillock of ants (a creature proposed to us by the Wise-man as a pattern of industry and wisdom) and is pleased to see that order and harmony, which they observed in their labours, that mutual help which they gave to each other, and how they run to the assistance of such as fell under their burthens. This seemed to him a lively representation of a regular community; and joined to his foregoing considerations, made him begin to be weary of his captivity, and to long to return to his abbot, and his monastery. When he came home at night, the woman perceived him to be pensive and melancholly; and having learnt the reason of it, perswaded him to go off; offering withal to accompany him. He concluded upon so doing; and having watched a proper opportunity, he killed two large goats of his flock, and made vessels of their skins; and prepared part of the meat, to take along with them for their journey. On the next evening they set out, making the best of their way to the river, which was about ten miles off; which they crossed, by the help of the vessels they had made of the skins of the goats. In crossing the river, they lost some part of the meat, they had taken with them; so that what remained was scarce enough to support them for
three

three days : and as for drink, they here took their fill of water, not knowing when they should meet with any more.

They made what haste they could through the sandy deserts ; looking back from time to time, with fear and trembling, to see if any one were pursuing after them : but they travelled mostly by night, as well to avoid the meeting with any of the Saracen rovers, as by reason of the excessive heats. And now they had been three days upon their journey, when looking behind them, they saw at a distance two men riding on camels, and hastening towards them. They concluded it was their master, who had found out what way they were gone, by their tracks in the sands ; and now they expected nothing but certain death. There was at hand a den or cave, that reached a great way under ground, to which they run for shelter. But fearing the serpents and other venomous creatures, that usually fly to such places as these, from the heat of the sun, they would not venture to penetrate to the further end, lest in flying from death in one shape, they should meet it in another. Wherefore finding within, near the entrance of the den, a hole on their left hand, they trusted themselves to it : and behold their master, with one of their fellow-servants, tracing them by their footsteps, quickly came up to the place. The master sent the servant in, to draw them out of the den : he stood without, holding the camels, and waiting for them, with his drawn sword. The servant passed the hole, where they lay concealed ; not being able to see, as being just then come out of the light ; and going forward he made a great noise, crying aloud. ‘ Come out ye ‘ villains, and receive your wages : come out, your ‘ master calls for you : Come out, and die.’ Malchus and his companion saw him pass by them, and looking after him, perceived a lionsess (roused by the noise) flying at him, and strangling him ; and then

drawing his bloody body further into the den. The master, knowing nothing of what had happened, finding that the servant did not come out, supposed that they, being two, might make resistance against one. He came therefore in a great rage, to the entrance of the cave, with his sword in his hand, and raving at the cowardice of his servant, began to enter in: but before he had passed the lurking hole, where Malchus lay, he was suddenly seized by the beast, before their eyes, and served in the same manner as his servant had been. Thus by an extraordinary providence were these servants of God delivered from the hands of men, that sought their life: but they were still in fear, lest they should meet with a no less cruel death from the furious beast, that was so near them. In this fear, they kept themselves close, without the least motion, or noise, having no other defense, or dependance, but the providence of God, and a good conscience, in point of chastity, which is respected even by lions. But it was not long before the lioness, finding herself discovered, and disturbed in her den, taking up her whelp (for she had but one) with her teeth, carried it out, in order to go and seek for another lodging; and so left them the whole cave to themselves. However the fear of meeting with the beast, kept them close prisoners till the evening: and then they ventured out, and found the two camels (who were of the kind which for their great swiftness are called dromedaries) and with them fresh provisions, of which they had great need: and thus after refreshing themselves with food, they mounted upon the camels, and continued their journey through the desarts, and on the tenth day arrived at the Roman camp, on the confines of the empire. The commanding officer, after having heard their history, sent them to Sabinius the governour of Mesopotamia, who gave them the price of their camels, and so dismissed them.

And

And now Malchus would have returned to his good father, the abbot of his monastery, in the desert of Chalcis : but being informed that he was gone to sleep in the Lord ; he turned his course towards Maronia, and there associated himself with the monks of that place : and as to his companion he committed her to the care of the nuns that were there : ever *loving her as if she had been his sister*, as he told St. Jerome, *yet never trusting himself to her, as a sister*, or exposing himself to danger by any familiarity with her. As St. Jerome concludes his narration here, we cannot pretend to add any further particulars of the acts of this servant of God : only that he continued to the end the saintly life he had begun ; and crowned it with a happy death : so that he has deserved to have his name recorded amongst the Saints in the Roman martyrology, October xxi.



ST. PACHOMIUS and ST. PALEMON.

Abridged from the Life of St. Pachomius by an ancient writer, who had his informations from the companions and disciples of the Saint.

ST. Pachomius was born in Thebais, or the higher Egypt, about the year 292, of infidel parents; who carried him, when yet a child, to the temples of their idols, to make him partaker of their impious sacrifices: but, as a presage of what he was to be one day, when they gave him to taste a little of the wine of the devils libations, or drink offerings, he presently cast it up again: and when upon another solemn occasion, he had accompanied them to celebrate the festival of an idol, that was worshipped upon the bank of the Nile, the devil was restrained, by his presence, from giving his answers, and deluding the people with his usual tricks, till by the mouth of the priest, he had ordered Pachomius to be sent away, as an enemy of the gods. Yet all this while he knew nothing at all of the Christian religion, but otherwise led a very moral life; and was always modest, temperate and chaste.

When he was twenty years old, Constantine being now emperor, he was, with many others of his countrymen, impressed for the service, upon occasion of a war just then breaking out. The young recruits were put on ship board, in order to go down the Nile, and so to be carried to the army. In their way they came to a certain city, the inhabitants of which were remarkably officious, in giving all the comfort and assistance, that was in their power, to these young men, who were kept close confined by their officers, and were in great distress. Pachomius enquired, who these men were that shewed so

so much humanity, and benevolence to the afflicted and distressed? And he was answered, that they were Christians, a set of men, who made it their business to do good to all men, and especially to strangers in distress. He further enquired, what was meant by the name of Christians, and what were their tenets? And they told him, they were godly and religious people, who believed in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God; and exercised themselves in all virtues and works of charity, in expectation of an eternal reward from God in another life. Pachomius was touched with this account; and being visited with the divine grace, withdrew himself into a corner, and lifting up his hands and heart to heaven, he called upon the great God, who made heaven and earth, to enlighten his soul with the knowledge of the true and perfect rule of life, which he would have him to follow: and promised if he would deliver him from his present bondage, that he would yield himself up to his divine service, for all the days of his life, and quit all worldly hopes, to adhere to him. He had not been long in the troops, before the emperour, having obtained the victory over his enemies, and put an end to the war, ordered the new raised soldiers to be discharged. And then, having recovered his wished for liberty, Pachomius returned to his own country; and presently put himself in the number of the catechumens, that is, of those that were under instruction in order to baptism. He was baptized, not long after, in the church of the town of Chino-boscium; and on the following night was animated with a heavenly vision, and strongly moved to consecrate himself entirely to divine love.

In order to follow this call, he repaired forthwith to a holy anchoret, who lived all alone in a neighbouring desert, whose name was Palemon; with a desire of putting himself under his conduct and direction, and of living with him. This servant of
God,

God, who led a very austere life, at first refused to receive him; remonstrating to him, that several others had in like manner pretended to put themselves under his discipline, but were quickly weary of his way of life. Pachomius desired that he would try him at least: for that he trusted in God, he would enable him to go through with all that he should require of him. My son, said Palemon, the way of life, that I follow, is not of the easiest. I eat nothing but bread and salt, and wholly refrain from oil and wine. I watch one half of the night; employing that time in solemn prayer, and in meditating on the word of God: and sometimes I pass the whole night without sleep. Pachomius replied, that he hoped the Lord Jesus Christ, with the help of his prayers, would give him the necessary courage and patience, to embrace, and to go through all this rigour, even to the end of his life. Palemon seeing the faith and resolution of the young man, was content to receive him, and to give him the monastick habit: and Pachomius on his part from the very beginning, embraced with so much ardour the exercises of a religious life, and advanced with such large steps, day by day, in the way of all virtue, and perfection, as to give an unspeakable satisfaction and joy to his master: who was continually giving thanks to Christ, for the wonders of his grace, which he discovered in his disciple. In the mean time, they lived together in one cell, and followed together the same practices of abstinence and prayer; and exercised themselves together in manual labours, that they might support themselves, without being burthensome to any one, and might have wherewith to entertain and relieve their indigent brethren. After the labours of the day, they watched and prayed together, for a good part of the night: and if upon these occasions Palemon observed that Pachomius was in danger of falling asleep, he led him out of the cell, and employed him

him in carrying loads of sand from one place to another, in order to overcome his drowfiness: telling him that he must not by any means suffer himself to relent in watching and praying, if he hoped to persevere to the end in his holy undertaking. Besides these exercises, Pachomius in a more particular manner, applied himself to the cultivating and purifying his interior. In order to this, in reading the divine scriptures, and committing them to his memory, (which was a part of his daily occupation;) he paused and made a deep meditation, upon every one of the heavenly precepts, which he found there; letting them sink into his soul, and studying to reduce them all to practice: but his favourite virtues, in which he particularly laboured to excel, were a profound humility, an unwearied patience, and an unbounded charity, and love, both for his God, and for his neighbour.

When Easter was come, Palemon bid Pachomius prepare them a dinner, for that great festival. He readily obeyed, and in consideration of the feast, had mingled together a little oil and salt, to be eaten with the wild herbs which he had gathered. But when after they had prayed together, Palemon came to table, and saw the sallad prepared for him; instead of eating of it, he wept bitterly; ‘saying, my Lord was crucified: and shall I indulge myself in eating oil?’ Neither would he at any rate be induced, to take any other food, but his bread and salt as usual: blessing it with the sign of the cross before the meal; and returning humble thank to our Lord after the meal.

One day, when Palemon and Pachomius were watching together, and had kindled a fire in their cell; another religious man coming to them, desired admittance. They courteously received the stranger: who after some discourse, ‘proposed to them that if they had faith, they should shew it, by standing with their bare feet over those burning
‘coals,

‘ coals, (as he himself was ready to do) whilst they
‘ repeated at leisure the Lords prayer.’ The servants
of God were shockt at this arrogance of their guest :
and Palemon begged of him to desist from such a mad
proposal. But he, instead of hearkening to him,
being pufft up with self-conceit and presumption,
went and stood upon the coals, and by the help of
the enemy, God so permitting, in punishment of
his pride, was not burnt at all. The next morning,
when he departed, he added to his pride the inso-
lence of insulting, as it were, over the two Saints,
and reproaching them with their want of faith. But
it was not long before this pride of his was most
dreadfully punished : for the devil seeing him, by rea-
son of his self-conceit, already stript of divine
grace, and in a condition to be made an easy prey to
lust; came one day to his cell, in the shape of a
beautiful woman, pretending to be in distress; and
being admitted, enkindled in his heart the fire of
concupiscence. The unhappy man readily yielded
to these wicked suggestions, and offering to put
them in execution, was so cruelly handled by this
evil spirit, as to be left extended upon the floor,
without speech or sense. However after some time he
came to himself; and as soon as he was able, went
to the cell of St. Palemon, telling what had hap-
pened to him; acknowledging that he had drawn
all this evil upon himself by his pride, and begging
their prayers, that the devil might not tear him in
pieces, or otherwise destroy him. The Saints la-
mented his case, and wept for him : but the ene-
my, to whom he had made himself a slave, would not
suffer him to stay with them : for all on a sudden he
jumped out of the cell; and after running about the
wilderness, like a madman; he went to the neigh-
bouring city of Panopolis, and there flung himself
into the furnace of the hot baths; and perished in
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the flames: a dreadful example of the sad consequences of self-conceit and pride!

Pachómius, from seeing and hearing these things took occasion of being still more humble, more mortified, and more fervent in prayer: and as he had a great love for solitude, he often withdrew himself from his cell into lonely places, and there spent a long time in prayer: earnestly begging of the divine Majesty, to deliver him from all the deceits and snares of the wicked one. There was also in the neighbourhood a wild place full of thorns, to which he often went, to get wood for their use; and upon these occasions, he walked bare-foot among the thorns, pleasing himself with the pricks and wounds that he received from them, by the meditation of the piercing of the feet of our Saviour upon the cross. One day, going to a greater distance than ordinary from his cell, he came to a place called Tabenna, at that time altogether uninhabited: where, when he had, according to his custom, remained a long time in prayer, he had a revelation, that he was to build a monastery there; and that many should resort to him, and put themselves under his conduct; for whose instruction and direction he should receive a rule from heaven: a sketch of which was here presented him by an Angel. When he returned back to St. Palemon, he acquainted him with this revelation, and induced him to go along with him to Tabenna: where they built a small cell; and for some time continued together in their accustomed exercises: till Palemon seeing the great grace of God, that was given to Pachomius, going back again left him sole possessor of this new cell; upon condition, that as long as they lived, they should frequently visit each other, for their mutual comfort, and spiritual assistance.

And now the time was drawing near, which was to crown the labours of St. Palemon, with an eternal reward

reward in the land of the living. As a preparation for this, he was seized with a grievous and most painful illness: which the brethren, who came to visit him, attributed to the austerities of his penitential life; and therefore prevailed upon him, to admit of some little comforts, in point of eating and drinking, in consideration of his weakness and age. But he quickly returned again to his former diet, alledging that the change had served for nothing but to increase his pains: and that if the martyrs had bravely suffered so many cruel torments, for the love of Christ, and purchased thereby a happy eternity; it would be a shame for him to forfeit the eternal reward, prepared for patient suffering, by cowardly yielding to his light and momentary pains. After this he continued for about a month, suffering with great courage and constancy: and then his soul, sufficiently purified in this furnace of tribulation, took her happy flight, in the company of Angels, to the heavenly mansions. His name is recorded amongst the Saints, in the Roman martyrology, on the eleventh of January.

After Pachomius had buried his holy father, and was returned to his cell at Tabenna, God was pleased to send him for his companion, his own brother: who having heard of his wonderful life, came to visit him, (which was the first time the Saint had seen any of his own relations since his conversion) and proposed to live with him. Pachomius received him with great joy: and found in his brother all the dispositions he could desire in a perfect religious man. So that they continued together, meditating on the law of God, day and night; and with all the affection of their souls, ever tending towards him; totally disengaged from the care and the love of any of the things of the earth. For though they laboured with their hands, for their daily food, they never laid up any thing for to-morrow; but whatsoever they earned

earned over and above the necessary sustenance of the day, they gave it to the poor. And now Pachomius added to his former austerities that of humbling his soul and body, with wearing hair-cloth: and for fifteen years, notwithstanding his hard labours, his long watchings, and his continual fastings, he never allowed himself to lie down at night, to take his rest; but what sleep he admitted of, he took sitting in the midst of his cell, without having any thing at his back, to lean against, for his ease.

In the mean time, the Saint was again admonished from heaven, concerning the religious congregation, that he was to institute, and the rules he was to give them: and therefore he began to enlarge the place of their habitation, and to build many more cells, for the reception of those, whom he expected in God's good time, to come and join him in the service of so great a master. His brother, whose spirit drew him rather to the life of an anchoret, in a more perfect solitude, after some time blamed his proceedings in this point of building; and being the elder brother, took upon him to bid him desist from this useless labour. The Saint could not help being troubled with this opposition; yet bore it with meekness and humility, and returned not one word of a reply. But the next night, prostrating himself in prayer all alone in the new building, he spent the whole night in lamenting his misery; and imploring the divine mercy; for having suffered in his soul the motions of impatience, and resentment on this occasion: and in begging the grace of God, to keep him, and to protect him from sin for the future; and so powerfully to assist him, for the time he had yet to come, that he might acquire the perfect mastery of all his passions, and serve him in all perfection, all the days of his life. And so many were the tears he shed that night, and so great the fervour of his prayer, the weather also being violently hot,

hot, that what with his weeping, and what with his sweat, the place, on which he lay prostrate, was as wet, as if water had been cast upon it. At other times, in his devotions by night, he used to excite himself to watching, and fervour in prayer, by stretching out his arms, and keeping his body immoveable, as if he were fastened to the cross, and remaining for several hours in this painful posture. As to the rest, he behaved himself always with that humility, meekness, and condescension to his brother, that they lived together in perfect harmony and peace, till God was pleased to take the brother to himself. Pachomius took care for his burial; and spent the whole night, in singing psalms and hymns over his body, and recommending his soul to God.

And now Pachomius, as if all was nothing that he had hitherto done, *forgetting with the apostle the things that were behind, stretched forth himself to the things that were before*, by a new fervour, in the study and practice of all religious perfection: having still before his eyes, the congregation which he was to establish in that place. This drew upon him the greater envy and malice of the wicked enemy; who ceased not to ply him with temptations, in every kind; and oftentimes with phantastical apparitions: seeking, either to puff him up with pride and vain-glory, by the honours he pretended to pay him; or to allure him to lust, by setting before him the figures of impudent women, with their bare bosoms; or to interrupt and distract him in his devotions, by a variety of illusions and ludicrous scenes: sometimes also assaulting him with open violence; and even laying upon him many grievous blows and stripes. But the Saint armed with a lively faith, and a strong confidence in Jesus Christ, whom he called to his assistance by fervent prayer, still came off with victory, in all these conflicts; and even with a great increase of virtue, to the confusion of all the powers of
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of hell. So that now he was enabled, by the gift of God, to tread under his feet serpents and scorpions; and the very crocodiles obeyed him. In the mean while he grudged himself even the short time he was obliged to allow to necessary sleep: because he would have gladly spent it all in prayer: and he earnestly prayed to the Lord, that he might be able to live without sleep; and to be wholly intent, night and day, on his divine love: which in some measure, as far as his mortal condition could bear, was granted to him. Now the great subject of his prayer, both night and day, was that the will of God might be ever accomplished in all things.

After this he was again visited by an Angel, who told him it was the will of God, that he should not only serve him himself, with all purity and perfection, but also should assemble together a great multitude of religious men, and train them up, and dedicate them to his divine service; according to that method and rule, which had been shewn him before. So that now he began to receive all such as came to him, that were desirous to fly from the contagion of the world, and by penance to present themselves as humble suitors to the mercies of God. And after having made them pass thro' a long trial or noviceship, he admitted them to the monastic profession: ever inculcating to them the strict obligation of their institute; as well in point of flying from all the allurements of the world; as of always diligently exercising themselves in the ways of virtue and holiness. Adding that a monk, according to the directions of the gospel, in the first place, ought to renounce the world in general: in the next place all disorderly affections of flesh and blood, to his nearest kindred and worldly friends: and in the last place (which was the hardest of all) ought to renounce also and deny himself; and to take up his cross, and follow Christ. As the number of those that resorted to him,

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encreased

encreased every day, he distributed them into different classes and monasteries, appointing to them all their regular exercices, and different employments, according to their abilities and dispositions; and making himself all to all: not only by a general solicitude for their spiritual progress; but also by being ever ready to serve, even the least of them, in the meanest offices: so as to make himself on every occasion, their cook, their gardiner, their porter, and especially their infirmarian; by the tender care he always shewed to the sick, by attending on them night and day.

He delivered to all his monks, the rules he had received from heaven; appointing for them a very moderate food, a mean habit, and no more sleep than necessity required. He laboured to have them all well grounded in *humility*, as the necessary foundation of all virtue; without which the spiritual building is sure to fall to the ground. To exclude all ambition, or desire of preferment, and superiority, he would not even allow his monks to be promoted to the priestly dignity, choosing that they should rather remain in the humble condition of laicks: and therefore till God sent him some priests, who desired to be admitted to his congregation, (for such as these he did not refuse, but received with great respect) he was forced to have recourse to some neighbouring clergymen, desiring them to come, and say mass in his monasteries, and to administer the holy communion to his religious. But above all things he recommended to his children, a ready and perfect *obedience*, as the very soul of religion; and the shortest way to all religious perfection; by divesting them of their own will, and making them securely find, and faithfully follow, in all things, the blessed will of God.

He had the bowels of a tender parent for all his children, but a more particular affection and compassion

passion, for the aged and sick; as also for young boys; serving them himself, and exercising the works of mercy in their regard, with his own hands, and taking a more especial care for their comfort and instruction. Nothing could equal the respect he had for the clergy in general, and more particularly for the bishops of God's church; or the zeal he had for the purity of the Catholic faith: which made him have a horror for the Arians and other hereticks, as enemies of God's truth. And as at that time the books of Origen (who had unhappily blended the errors of the Platonick philosophers with the Christian doctrine) were very much handed about, among the Egyptian monks, to the great prejudice of their souls; Pachomius declared an open war against these dangerous books; and prohibited to all his monks the reading of them.

He had likewise a great zeal, for the salvation of the souls; not only of his own religious, but also of all others, whom he saw in want of spiritual assistance. He observed there were in that country, many of the meaner sort of people, employed in the care of the cattle, who for want of having a church at hand, to which they might resort, lived in great ignorance, and without the use of the sacraments. To remedy this evil, he applied to the bishop of Tentyra, and procured that a church should be built for them in the neighbouring village: and as it was some time before they were provided with clergymen; he went himself with his monks, on sundays and holy-days, and read to these poor ignorant people, lessons out of the divine Scriptures, proper for their instruction; and this in so edifying a manner, and with so serene and heavenly a countenance, and such a faintly air of devotion, as made his auditory receive him, and attend to him, not as to a man, but as to an Angel sent them from heaven. And many there were, who, upon this occasion, were brought over by his instruc-

tions, from infidelity and errour to the christian faith. The more because he on his part employed in their behalf, not only the words of exhortation and doctrine, but also the more effectual arms of fervent prayer for their conversion, accompanied with many sighs and tears.

At this time the great St. Athanasius was bishop of Alexandria: who in visiting the churches of Egypt (which were all under his jurisdiction) came also to Tabenna, the place where our Saint had established his monasteries. Pachomius venerated this holy patriarch, as the great pillar of the church of God; and respected him much more for his sanctity, than for his dignity; and therefore caused all his monks to go out to meet him, singing psalms and hymns; and to receive him with great reverence and joy: yet so that he himself would not appear at the head of them; nor any way distinguish himself amongst them; but hid himself in the crowd; to avoid his being particularly taken notice of by that great prelate; and, as he feared, promoted against his will to the priestly dignity; at the recommendation of the bishop of Tentyra his diocesan, who very much desired to have him priest.

Whilst Pachomius was happily employed in conducting a great number of holy souls, in the ways of life, and directing them to perfection, both by word and example; a sister of his, hearing the fame of his sanctity, came one day to his monastery, desiring to see him. The Saint, who admitted no woman into his monastery, sent her word by the porter, that he was alive and well: and willed her to go home in peace, and not to make herself uneasy, on account of her not seeing him in this transitory life. But added, that if she desired to follow the like kind of life as he did, in order to find mercy with God, and to secure to her soul a happy eternity; she should think well of it: and if this should be her fixt resolution; he
would

would give orders for the building a proper mansion for her, at a distance from his monastery: where she might serve the Lord in all purity of soul and body, under regular discipline; and might in time engage many others, by her example, to dedicate themselves in like manner to the love and service of Christ, in a religious life. For as to the finding, as long as we carry about with us this body of death, any true rest, or content, or happiness, but in the works of godliness, he said, was altogether impossible. His sister hearing this, shed a flood of tears: and being at the same time touched with a strong grace, determined upon the spot to choose that better part, which he had recommended to her: and as soon as the monastery was in readiness, which he ordered to be built for her, she entered into it; and there served our Lord, with such great perfection, as to attract many others of her sex, to come and join with her in her holy undertaking; and to consecrate themselves to Christ, under her conduct. This was the origin of the nuns of the order of St. Pachomius: to whom the Saint gave the same rules as to his monks: and took the strictest care imaginable, that the one should have little or no communication with the other; that so he might cut off all occasions of temptation.

Amongst the disciples of St. Pachomius, the most illustrious imitator of his virtues, and his successor in sanctity, was St. Theodore, whose history is as follows. He was born of Christian parents, very noble according to the world, and very rich in worldly goods. His father dying when he was very young, left him heir to a plentiful estate, under the care of a tender and affectionate mother. But he had a better father in heaven, who shewed his great care, and tender love for him, by an early taking away out of his heart the love of the world and its fooleries; and sweetly inviting him, to his divine service; and that in a very extraordinary man-

ner, when he was yet scarce twelve years old. It was upon a solemn occasion of publick mirth, when a great feast was preparing in his house, (which abounded in rich furniture, and all kind of worldly wealth) that he was suddenly visited with a heavenly light in his interiour, which clearly shewed him the nothingness of all these transitory things; and was accompanied with a strong call to give up all, to follow Christ. ‘Oh! what would it profit thee, O unhappy Theodore, said he to himself, on this occasion, if thou shouldst even gain the whole world, and enjoy all the temporal delights the world can give; if thou shouldst lose by this means the eternal goods and immortal joys of heaven. For there is no pretending to pass thy life here in these vain pleasures and delights, and yet expect to merit those everlasting rewards hereafter.’ With these sentiments he withdrew himself into a private closet; and there prostrating himself on the floor, with many sighs and tears, he prayed thus to our Lord: ‘O almighty God, who knowest all the secrets of hearts, thou knowest there is not any one thing in this world that I prefer before the love of thee. Wherefore I implore thy mercy, that thou wouldst direct me to thy holy will; enlightning my poor soul, that she may never sleep in the darkness of sin, and of eternal death: but being redeemed by thy grace, may be brought to praise and glorify thee forever.’ Whilst he was praying to this effect, his mother came in, and finding him all in tears, asked him, who had given him any trouble, or offence, that he should grieve in this manner, and separate himself at dinner-time from the company? that they had been seeking him every where, and were in great concern about him. He begged of her to make herself easy, and to go to her meat: but desired withal to be excused from bearing her company. From this time he accustomed himself, in going to school, to fast every

every day till the evening; and frequently to eat nothing for two days: and for two whole years, whilst he remained in the world, he totally refrained from all delicacies; contenting himself with the meanest and coarsest kind of food. After some time, he quitted all that he seemed to possess in the world, and entered into a monastery: where he had not been long before he heard of St. Pachomius, and was inspired with a desire of putting himself under his discipline. He followed the call, and going to Tabenna, was willingly received by the Saint; and, in a short time, made a very considerable progress in all virtues, by the great fervour with which he applied himself to watching, fasting, prayer, and all good works.

Whilst Theodore was climbing up the hill of Christian perfection, by a constant attention, to please God, and to omit nothing which he conceived to be for his spiritual advancement: his mother having heard where he was, attempted to bring him back into the world. Wherefore having obtained letters of recommendation from some bishops (to whom she knew Pachomius could refuse nothing) she went to the monastery of the nuns, and wrote from thence to the holy abbot, desiring that she might see her son. Pachomius called for Theodore, and told him how the case stood: and that to satisfy his mother's desire, and in consideration of the holy prelates, whose letters she had brought, he thought he might go, and see her. And will you assure me, reverend father, said Theodore, that after receiving such great lights, and calls from God, as I have received; and leaving both my mother, and all things else in the world, for the love of Christ; I shall have nothing to answer to our Lord at the last day, if I should go now to see my mother, to gratify flesh and blood; and give this disedification to my brethren? Nay said Pachomius, if you don't judge it

expedient for your soul, I don't desire to compel you to it: for it is far more becoming a true monk, whose profession is to renounce all the world, and himself too, to shun all manner of unprofitable and worldly visits, and vain conversation; and to admit of no other company, but of those from whose godly discourse he may be edified in the way of God. This refusal, however disagreeable it might be at first to the mother of Theodore, turned to her great advantage, in order to the salvation of her soul. For in hopes of meeting with some opportunity, sooner or later, of seeing her son, amongst the other religious, she resolved to continue with the nuns, and to follow the same holy way of life. And as to Theodore, his whole life from this time was so perfect, and saint like in every regard, that after his death he was enrolled amongst the Saints. His name occurs in the Roman martyrology on the twenty-eighth of December.

To return to St. Pachomius, as he received unspeakable comfort and joy, by occasion of the fervour of Theodore, and many others of his monks, whom he saw advancing by large steps in the way of religious perfection: so he was exceedingly afflicted, when he met with any, who under the habit of religion, had nothing of the spirit of religion, but lived rather according to the flesh; not having yet put off the old man of their former worldly conversation. He spared no pains with such as these: employing as well admonitions, exhortations, and corrections, as fervent prayers to God, and tears poured out in their behalf, in order to obtain for them the grace of a perfect conversion; and he did not desist till they were either brought to a sense of their duty, and reclaimed from their evil ways; or else, if they proved incorrigible, were cut off from his congregation. A young man, named Silvanus, who had been an actor upon the stage, leaving this sinful profession, came to put himself under the discipline of the

the Saint: and was received in his monastery. But whilst he was here, he led for some time a very careless life, breaking through the rules of the congregation, and spending his time in entertaining himself and others, with his former ridiculous buffooneries, to the great scandal of his brethren: who desired the holy abbot to dismiss him. The man of God, who was very unwilling to send back again into the world any of his children; employed, besides his charitable remonstrances and exhortations, which were without effect, his more potent arms of continual prayer, sighs and tears, for his poor soul: and then, taking him aside, represented to him, in so strong and powerful a manner, the truths of eternity, the dreadful judgments that threaten impenitent sinners; with the rest of the motives, that are most proper to excite in souls both the fear and love of God; that the grace of God opening the heart of Silvanus, he was immediately touched, with so lively a sense of his sins, and so great a compunction for them, that he not only entirely refrained, for the time to come, from his former faults; and began to lead a new life, of great edification to the rest of his brethren: but also in every place, and in every occupation, he was always weeping and lamenting for his past crimes. Insomuch that he could not refrain from sobbing and mourning, even when he was taking his meat with the other religious. And when they desired him, not to afflict himself to such an excess as this; which was even troublesome to them: but rather to restrain these outward tokens of grief, which were no way necessary, even to the most perfect compunction; the true seat of which was within in the heart: he told them he would gladly obey them; and that he made all the efforts he could to resist, and refrain from these tears: but that he found a certain flame burning in his breast, that would not suffer him to be quiet. But, said they, what subject, or occasion is there for all these floods

floods of tears ? ‘ Ah ! said he, how can I help weeping, when I see so many holy brethren, the dust of whose feet I ought to venerate, so charitable as to take notice of me ? When I see a wretch, that is come from the play-house, quite laden with sins, receive so many good offices ? Alas ! I have reason to fear, lest the earth should open under my feet, and swallow me down, as it did Dathan and Abiron ; in punishment of my having profaned all that was sacred (after so clear a knowledge and experience of divine grace,) by leading this slothful and wicked life. And do you wonder at my tears ? Oh ! I ought in all reason to labour, to expiate my innumerable sins, with ever flowing fountains of tears : and if I could even pour forth this wretched soul of mine in mourning ; it would be all too little to punish my crimes.’ With these sentiments of humility and contrition, he made so great a progress in virtue and sanctity, as to be admired by the holy abbot himself ; who proposed him to the rest of his monks, as a singular pattern of humility : and assured them, that neither Theodore himself, nor any of the rest of them, whose lives had been the most innocent, and who seemed, by their good works, to have already troden Satan under their feet ; were near so much out of danger of this enemy’s rising up against them, and overthrowing them by pride, as Silvanus was : whose perpetual contrition and humility kept the devil at so great a distance, that he could have no manner of hold of him. This glorious penitent, after eight years spent in thus continually offering to God the sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart, put a happy end to his penitential course of life, by dying the death of the Saints. And St. Pachomius gave testimony, that at the hour of his death, a multitude of heavenly spirits took his soul along with them, with great joy, and presented it as a choice sacrifice to Christ our Lord.

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There was another also of the religious, whose sanctity was much esteemed by Pachomius; whom he likewise proposed as an extraordinary pattern of virtue and perfection, to the rest of his monks. His name was Zacheus: who after he had for a long time served the Lord, with great diligence and fervour in a religious state, fell ill of the jaundice, which held him till his death. On this occasion, he had a cell appointed him, in which he lived separated from the rest of the religious: yet he omitted none of the regular exercises of the community, but was always with the rest at all the hours of prayer. He never allowed himself in his illness any sleep in the day; and every night before he laid himself down, he employed himself for some time in meditating on some passages of the holy Scriptures; and then signing his whole body with the sign of the cross, and glorifying God, he took his short repose. About midnight he rose again, and continued praising God, till the time of the morning-prayers. His whole food was only bread and salt: and he spent the whole time, that was vacant from other duties, in working with his hands, in making mats. In handling and twisting the palm-leaves, which he made use of in his work, his hands were very much galled and wounded; oftentimes to the shedding of blood: but he never interrupted his work for that, nor betrayed the least sign of impatience. One of the brethren seeing one day his hands grievously wounded, and all bloody by his work; entreated him to consider his illness, and to spare himself: for that God, who knew what he suffered, and how much he was otherwise afflicted by his disease, would not impute it to him for sin, or charge him with sloth, if he did not work. And as to the community, they expected it not from him: but as they willingly exercised hospitality to the greatest strangers, and to all that were in want, they would no doubt take a much greater pleasure in
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serving him. Zacheus answered: that he could not possibly think of living without working. Well said the other, if you are fixt in your resolution of continuing to work; at least anoint your hands with oil, to prevent the loss of so much blood. Zacheus followed his advice: but instead of finding any ease, by the application of the oil, to his wounded hands; the pain encreased to such a degree, as to become quite insupportable. St. Pachomius came to visit him on this occasion; and treating him as one, that stood not in need of milk, but was capable of digesting the strongest diet; reprehended him for having sought this assuagement to his pains, which God had sent him for his profit; and not having resigned himself wholly to him; but rather trusted in this visible medicine than in the living God. Zacheus made no apology for himself: but meekly answered: 'Forgive me, reverend father, and pray to the Lord for me, that he may vouchsafe in his mercy to remit me this sin also, together with all my other sins.' My author adds, from the testimony of many of the brethren, that he bewailed himself for a whole twelvemonth, (on this occasion) and observed during that time so strict a fast, as to eat but once in two days, and that in a small quantity. Pachomius used to direct to this holy man such as were afflicted, or oppressed with sadness: for he had a wonderful grace in administering comfort to all that were in trouble or affliction of mind. He continued his labours, and conflicts to the end: when in a good old age, he passed from temporal sorrows to eternal joys.

St. Pachomius was invited by Varus, the holy bishop of Panopolis, to come into his diocese, and to establish there some monasteries of his institute. In his way he visited divers religious houses, of the number of those that were under his direction. In coming to one of these houses, he met with the brethren carrying out the corps of one of the religious, accom-

accompanied by his worldly friends and relations, in order to be buried with a solemn office, in an honorable manner. At the sight of the Saint, they all stood still, desiring him to pray, both for themselves and the deceased brother. He made his prayer, and understanding in spirit the wretched state of that soul; (for the man had led a very careless and indolent life) he forbid them to proceed in their psalms; ordered them to take off the fine garments, with which they had clad him, and to bury him without any solemnity, or tokens of honour: which, as the holy abbot assured them, would be rather a disservice, than a service to his unhappy soul. Which proceeding of the Saint was designed for a warning to all his disciples, not to rely upon wearing the habit of religion, without the life of religion. He staid here two days, teaching and instructing his religious, and arming them against the deceits of Satan: when a message was brought him, from the monastery of Chenoboscium, that one of his religious there was near his end; who desired to see him, and to have his last blessing before he died. He hastened thither; but when he came within two or three miles of the monastery, he heard a heavenly melody in the air, and looking up, saw the soul of that servant of God carried up by Angels to heaven: who died at that instant of time; as the companions of the Saint, to whom he discovered, what he had heard and seen, found when they arrived at the monastery.

Pachomius was received with great honour by the bishop; who gave him, and his monks, proper places for the building of their monasteries: which, whilst they were establishing, some wicked men, by the instigation of Satan, pulled down in the night, what they built up in the day. The Saint preached patience to his people, on this occasion: but God took his cause in hand: for one night, when these wretches were intent upon their wickedness, they were suddenly consumed

fumed by fire, and seen no more. On many other occasions, God was pleased to work miracles, in favour of the faith and sanctity of his servant Pachomius; of which these instances may suffice. A woman, that had laboured for a long time under an issue of blood, was suddenly cured, by coming behind him, and only touching his habit, when he was sitting in the church of Tentyra, with Denys the priest. Many others were healed by his prayers of divers diseases, and delivered from the possession of wicked spirits. A man came to him one day, desiring him to cast the devil out of his daughter. The Saint told him, that he and his religious never spoke to women: but that he should send him in any garment, that belonged to his daughter, which he would bless in the name of the Lord; and that he trusted in Christ, she should be rescued from the power of the enemy. The father brought him one of her garments; which when the holy abbot had looked upon, he presently understood in spirit the case of the young woman; viz that she was guilty of sins of impurity, by which she had violated the vow of chastity, she had made to God; and that upon this account the devil had permission to take possession of her. He returned therefore the garment to the father: telling him how the case stood; and that if he desired his daughter should be delivered from the devil, she must first repent, and turn from her sins; and promise to be guilty of them no more, and then she should find mercy. Her father took her to task, and at length she acknowledged her guilt, with great signs of repentance; and promised, in the most solemn manner, to refrain from any such like sins for the future. Upon which the man of God gave the father some oil, which he had blessed: and by the use of it she was presently cured; and never ceased to glorify God, who had delivered her at once, both from the possession of the devil, and from her sinful habit.

habit. The Saint on his part was never puffed up with pride, or vain-glory, on occasion of any of these miraculous cures, that God wrought by him : but continuing always in the fear of God, and in a perfect sense of his own nothing, he kept his soul always even, so as neither to be elevated with good success, nor depressed with evil. And if at any time God did not grant the things he petitioned for, he was perfectly resigned to the divine will : knowing that to be the best, both for himself, and for all others, which God ordained, and saw to be most fitting.

One of the religious, who was a diligent imitator of the virtues of the holy abbot, standing one day in prayer, was struck in the foot by a scorpion : and though the torment, he suffered on the occasion, was extream ; and the pain, together with the poison, spread itself even to the heart, and threatened him with present death : yet he would by no means interrupt his devotions, nor stir from his place, till he had finished his prayer. And then Pachomius prayed to our Lord for him, and he was presently healed. On the other hand, Theodore, being afflicted with a most violent pain in the head, desired the man of God to pray for his cure : but he told him, that it was far better for him, to bear his pain (which God had sent for his profit) with perfect resignation, patience, and humility ; how long soever it might continue to afflict him ; and to give thanks to his divine Majesty for it, as for a great favour. For that a religious man might merit more, and please God better, by patience and conformity to the divine will in sufferings and sickness, than by the most rigorous abstinence, and long continued prayers in the time of health.

And now after our Saint had established his congregation upon a solid bottom, and assembled together a very great number of holy souls, serving God in
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great perfection; many of whom he had sent before him to heaven: he himself was taken with his last illness, a little after Easter (anno 348). In his sickness, he preserved always a serene and chearful countenance: and having called together the brethren, and made an excellent exhortation to them; begging of them, to remember all the lessons he had given; to fly from the conversation of hereticks; and to be ever vigilant in prayer, and all other exercises of virtue; he recommended to them the choice of a successor. And after two days, arming himself with the sign of the cross, and looking with a chearful aspect on an Angel of light, who was directed from heaven to him; he breathed out his holy soul, to take her flight to her heavenly country, upon the ninth of May. His name stands recorded amongst the Saints, in the Roman martyrology, on the fourteenth of May; and in the menologies of the Greeks on the fifteenth: where also they affirm that the number of his monks, before his death, reached to one thousand four hundred. But Palladius, (afterwards bishop of Helenopolis) who has given an abstract of the life of St. Pachomius, in his *Historia Lausiaca*, chap. 38. and who had visited in person the holy inhabitants of the desarts of Egypt, some years after the death of this Saint, affirms that the whole number of the monks, whom S. Pachomius had under his care in all his monasteries, amounted to seven thousands: and that in his own monastery of Tabenna alone, there were one thousand four hundred monks. Now all these maintained themselves with the labour of their hands, without being troublesome to any one; and at the same time, by their frugal way of living, were enabled also to exercise hospitality, and to give charity to the poor, with a liberal hand.

ST. AMMON, Abbot.

*From St. Athanasius, in his life of St. Antony, chap. 32.
Rufinus and Palladius in their history of the holy fathers
of the desarts of Egypt.*

ST. Ammon or Amon, the first founder of the monasteries of Nitria; and as some authors affirm, the first author of a cenobitical or conventual life; was born in Egypt, in some part of the third century, of parents wealthy and noble, according to the world. From a boy he embraced a faintly life, desiring to serve God, in perfect purity both of soul and body; but when he was come to the age of two and twenty, he was compelled, against his will, by his kindred, to marry a Christian virgin, of the like virtuous dispositions, as the sequel demonstrated. For as soon as they were left alone on their wedding night, Ammon represented to his spouse, how much more happy, and more pleasing to God the state of virginity was, beyond that of the use of matrimony; strengthening what he said with the authority of the holy Scriptures; and so powerfully exhorting her to preserve the treasure of her virginal purity; and instructing her in the manner of life she should lead to please Christ, the true spouse of virgins; that she willingly agreed, they should live, like brother and sister, in the same house, in perfect continence, lying in different beds; and only united with the bonds of the Spirit, in charity and prayer. Thus they lived together in the world, for eighteen years; Ammon dividing his time in such manner, as to give a good part of it to labour, by working in his garden and balm-yard, and the rest to his exercises of prayer and devotion; and usually fasting till the evening. At the end of this time, their parents and friends, who had obliged them to marry, being now dead, they

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agreed

agreed to live asunder, and both of them to embrace a monastic life. Ammon therefore left her in possession of the house; which in process of time she turned into a nunnery; many devout virgins resorting to her, and putting themselves under her direction: and he for his part, retired into the wilderness of mount Nitria, forty miles distant from Alexandria: where he built himself two cells; and laid the foundations of that admirable religious institute, which was afterwards followed there by no fewer than five thousand religious, dwelling in about fifty different habitations; but all meeting to their publick devotions in one large church, served by eight priests.

As to the particulars of the acts of St. Ammon, after his retiring to mount Nitria; as none of the ancients has given us his life at large, we must content ourselves with putting down here in short what is related of him incidently, in the life of St. Antony. chap 32. Here we are informed by St. Athanasius, 1st, that St. Ammon was united with St. Antony in the bands of a most holy friendship; and frequently visited him: 2dly, that from his childhood, to an advanced age, he always lived the life of a Saint: 3dly, that he was greatly renowned for signs and wonders, and miraculous graces: and 4thly, that at the hour of his death, his soul was seen by St. Antony (who was then at the distance of thirteen days journey from Nitria) taking her happy flight to heaven, escorted thither by a multitude of heavenly spirits. As an instance of how great a favourite he was of heaven, and how great a lover of modesty and purity; the same St. Athanasius relates in the same place: how upon a certain occasion, when he was obliged, with his disciple Theodore (who was also a man of great sanctity) to pass over the river Lycus, swelled with sudden rains; he desired Theodore to go back, and keep at a distance, whilst he put off his garments, that they might not see one another

another naked : but as he was thinking to strip himself, he found a great repugnance to it, through modesty and shame of seeing his own naked flesh : when, behold, on a sudden he was in an extasy or trance ; and found himself on the other side of the river, without knowing how he came thither. Theodore coming up was surprised to find he had been so expedite in passing the river ; the more because he could perceive no marks of moisture upon his feet or garments ; and he did not cease to importune him, to let him know, how he got over the river, till upon his promise of keeping the matter secret, as long as Ammon should live, he disclosed the whole to him. This Theodore is different from S. Theodore, disciple of S. Pachomius, but has deserved no less than he by his extraordinary virtues, a place amongst the Saints : with whom his name stands enrolled in the Roman martyrology, January 7.

Rufinus, in his lives of the fathers, chap. 30. and *Palladius* in his *Historia Lausaca*, chap. 3. relate some other instances, both of the grace of miracles ; and of the prophetic spirit of S. Ammon. When he lived retired in the wilderness, a youth was brought to him bound in chains, who had been bit by a mad dog, and was raging mad. His parents, who came along with him, begged of the Saint, (who by this time was renowned for miracles) that he would cure him. He told them, they asked a thing that far exceeded his merits. But thus much, said he, I will tell you : do but you restore to the poor widow the ox that you privately stole, and your son shall be healed. They were frightened, when they heard him speak of the theft, which they were sensible he could not know but by revelation. However they made the restitution, which was required of them ; and the young man, at the prayer of the servant of God, was perfectly cured.

Another time, when two men had come to visit him in his solitude ; finding that he stood in need of a large vessel, to keep water in, for the use of such as resorted to him, they promised to bring him a capacious vessel for that purpose. Now one of these men was the master of a camel ; the other had only an ass. The former, when he returned home to his village, repented of his promise : alledging that he would not risk the life of his camel, by loading him with so heavy a burthen. Well, said the other, I will not be worse than my word ; but will venture to lay upon my ass this load, which, you say, would kill your camel : trusting that the merits of the man of God will make that possible which appears impossible. He did as he said, and the ass carried the vessel with so much ease, that he did not seem to feel any burthen at all. When he came to the cell of the Saint, he commended the man's faith : and told him that his neighbour in the mean while had lost his camel by death. And accordingly, when he came home, he found that his neighbour's camel, whilst he was in his way to the Saint, had been worried by wolves.

As to the disciples of St. Ammon, and the monks his successors in the congregation of mount Nitria, they were for a long time after renowned for their regular discipline, hospitality, and charity ; which is even cried up to the skies, by Rufinus and Palladius, from their own experience : as having been some time amongst them. St. Jerome also, as we learn from his apology against Rufin, made a journey on purpose to see them : ' I went, says he, to Egypt, I surveyed the monasteries of Nitria ; and amongst the choirs of the Saints, I plainly perceived there were some asps lurking.' Which he adds, because in his time the errors of Origen had crept in amongst some of the religious. As to the rest, we learn from the authors above named, that as soon

as they, and their company, were come within sight of their monasteries, the religious, according to their custom, came out to meet them, bringing with them loaves of bread, and pitchers of water, to refresh them, after the fatigue of their journey over those burning sands: that then they conducted them to the church, singing psalms; and there washed their feet, and wiped them with their towels: striving which of them should introduce them into their cells, and entertain them there; not only with all offices of humanity and charity, that were in their power, with regard to their corporal refreshment, but also with excellent lessons of spirituality, for the benefit of their souls: in which line they particularly inculcated the practice of their favourite virtues of humility and meekness, in which they themselves singularly excelled.

For the entertainment of strangers and externs, they had built a large hospital, near to the church, where all that came were welcome to stay as long as they pleased, altho' it were for two or three years: yet so that after the first seven days they were employed in some kind of work, as all the monks were; or at least, if they were persons of note, in reading the good books they put in their hands. They were also to have no conversation together, but to keep silence at least till noon. As to the afternoon, 'about the ninth hour, one might stand, (says Palladius, chap. 7.) and hear in every one of the monasteries, the religious singing hymns and psalms to Christ, and joining prayers with their hymns, in so sweet a manner, that a man would be apt to think himself elevated on high, and translated into a heavenly paradise.'

About ten miles off Nitria, further in the wilderness, there was a place, called *Cellia*, from the multitude of the *cells* that were there dispersed up and down. Here such of the Nitrian monks as aspired after a greater solitude and perfection, made themselves cells,

in which they lived as anchorets, at a good distance from one another; never conversing together, or seeing one another, but when they met at church, which was twice a week: unless the case of sickness, or some office of charity, required that any one should visit the cell of another, or break in upon his silence and solitude. In this place, charity, piety and sanctity, was seen to reign in its full perfection.

St. Ammon passed to a better life on the fourth of October, (on which day he is commemorated in the menologies of the Greeks) about the middle of the fourth century.



S T. P A U L the Simple.

From Rufinus, chap. 31. and Palladius, chap. 28.

P A U L, from his innocent simplicity surnamed *the Simple*, was by his education a plain honest husbandman, who had lived in the world to the age of sixty, in a married state, without blame : when, upon a certain occasion, having taken his wife in adultery, he resolved to leave both her and the world ; and going eight days journey into the wilderness, he addressed himself to St. Antony, desiring him to receive him into the number of his disciples, and to teach him the way to save his soul. St. Antony told him he was too old to think of being a monk now ; and that he could never be able to go through with the difficulties and austerities of a monastick life, especially in his eremitical way : but go, said he, into the village, and there employ yourself in working for your bread, and praising God : and having said this, he went in and shut his cell. Paul still continued fasting and praying at the door, for three days and three nights ; till Antony seeing his faith and perseverance, went out to him, and told him, that the way to salvation was obedience ; and that if he would be his disciple, he must do all that he said to him : which Paul readily promised to do : and made good his word, by complying to a tittle, with every injunction of the Saint, how difficult, or irrational soever it seemed to be. For Antony, in order to try him, imposed upon him a variety of labours, mortifications, and humiliations, till he found him to be a man entirely humble and simple, and quite according to his own heart. He gave him therefore a rule of life, which he should follow, and after some

time appointed him a cell, at the distance of three miles from his own: where he frequently visited him: teaching him to spend in such a manner his solitary hours, in manual labours; as that whilst his hands were at work, his heart should be in heaven. And as to his corporal sustenance, he directed him never to eat or drink, till the evening; and then with such moderation, as never to take his fill; especially in his drink; tho' this was nothing but water.

By following these rules, and more particularly by a constant and fervent application of his soul to God, in mental prayer, Paul quickly arrived at a great perfection in all virtues. Amongst which his obedience, as well as his humility, was singularly remarkable. One day when many religious were assembled with St. Antony, and were conferring about spiritual matters, making frequent mention of the prophets; Paul, who was one of the company, according to his simplicity, asked whether the prophets lived before our Saviour's time, or since? St. Antony, by way of reproofing his putting such an absurd question, made a nod to him, saying: *Go, hold your peace.* Paul, who had resolved to obey every word, that Antony said to him, as if it had been an oracle from God himself, immediately went away to his cell; and kept there so strict a silence, that he would not upon any occasion utter so much as one word: till Antony, hearing of it, desired him to speak, and asked him what was the meaning of his long silence? Why, said he, father, it was in obedience to you: for you bid me go, and hold my peace. St. Antony took occasion from hence to say to the rest of his disciples: ' This man condemns us all; ' for whereas we are so often wanting in our ' obedience to our great master, who speaks to ' us from heaven; he always observes to a tittle ' every

‘ every word, of what kind soever, which he hears
‘ from my mouth.’

With this obedience and humility, Paul advanced daily, by large steps, towards God: and was rewarded by him, with such admirable gifts and graces, as to work both more, and greater miracles, than St. Antony himself. Infomuch that this holy abbot used to send to Paul, such as he himself could not cure. For an instance of this, Palladius relates, how a young man, being brought to Antony, who was possessed by a most furious and obstinate devil; he told the people, that this same was one of the principal devils; and that the grace of casting out this kind of wicked spirits was not as yet given to him, but to the humble and simple Paul. He himself therefore conducted him to Paul: and said to him, ‘ here cast out the devil from this man, that ‘ he may go home, and glorify God.’ And why don’t you do it yourself? said Paul. I have something else to do, said Antony; and so he went home to his cell. Paul fell to his prayers: and then, rising up, said to the devil, in his innocent way, ‘ Get thee gone out of the man: father Antony says ‘ thou must go out.’ The devil called him a foolish old man; and told him he would not go out for him: and when he urged him a second time, repeating again that Antony said he must go out: he abused both him and Antony, calling them by contemptuous names; and still refused to depart. ‘ If thou ‘ wilt not go out, said Paul, I will go and tell Jesus ‘ Christ; and it shall be worse for thee.’ The devil broke out into blasphemies against Christ: and obstinately kept his hold. The holy man therefore went out of his cell, in the broiling heat of the sun at noonday (which in Egypt, says my author, is not unlike the Babylonian furnace) and standing upon a rock, addressed his prayer to Jesus Christ crucified; pro-

protesting to him in his simplicity, that he would neither come down from that rock, nor either eat or drink, till he was pleased to hear him, and to force that devil out of the man. When, behold, whilst he is praying, the devil roars out, 'I go, I go, I suffer violence, this is an intolerable tyranny: I am departing from the man, never, never more to return. 'Tis Paul's humility and simplicity casts me out: I know not whither I must go.' With these words the man was presently delivered; and as a token of the devil's departure, a serpent of an unusual length, was seen at the same time to crawl away to the Red-sea.

Many other and greater miracles were wrought by the prayers of this Saint: but what is related of him in an ancient author, published by Rosweyds in the 7th book of the lives of the fathers, C. 23. is still more admirable. *viz.* That he had received this grace from God, that he could read in the faces of the brethren, their very thoughts, and the whole state of their souls. Thus one day, when the religious were entering into the church; he saw all but one of them go in, with a great serenity and brightness on their countenance; attended with their good Angels full of joy: but one of the company appeared black and gloomy; having on either side of him a devil, who held him with a bridle; whilst his good Angel followed behind, at a distance; and appeared sad and sorrowful. The man of God, seeing this, spent the whole time that the brethren were at church, in weeping and lamenting for that soul, which he understood to be in the deplorable state of mortal sin. But when they came out again, looking on that same person, he found him quite changed; his countenance now was bright and beautiful; his good Angel was joyful; and the devils stood off at a distance, grieving for having lost their prey. The Saint

Saint seeing this, could not contain his joy : but broke out, with a lowd voice, into the praises of God ; extolling the wonders of his mercy, shewed in behalf of poor sinners. And having related what he had seen, desired of the brother (for the glory of God, and the edification of all the rest) to declare what change he had experienced in his interiour, which could give occasion to that sudden and wonderful alteration, which he had remarked in his exteriour. He did as the Saint desired, and publicly confessed, that his soul had been indeed in a most wretched condition, thro' a habit of impurity : but that upon hearing that day in the church those words of God, by the prophet Isaias, Chap. 1. *Be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes, cease to do perversely ; learn to do well—and then if your sins are as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow—If you be willing, and will hearken to me, you shall eat the good things of the land. But if you will not, and will provoke me to wrath, the sword shall devour you, because the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* He was strongly touched with a sense of the heinousness of his sins, and with a horroure and compunction for them, joined with a great love of the infinite goodness and mercy of God ; and a full determination to renounce his evil ways, and to dedicate himself henceforward in good earnest to the love and service of so good a God : and that this had been the employment of his thoughts, and the subject of his prayer, all the time he was in church. Upon this declaration of his, all that were present magnified the mercies of God, who so readily forgives the greatest sinners, when, like the prodigal child, they return to him, with a contrite and humble heart. This whole passage is recorded by my author, as an instance of the wonderful efficacy of perfect contrition, in the speedy reconciliation it makes between the sinner and God,

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But it shews at the same time the wonderful efficacy also of the prayers and tears of our Saint, which procured for this sinner the effectual grace of this perfect contrition.

St. Paul the Simple is registred amongst the saints in the Roman martyrology on the seventh of March.



ST. MACARIUS the Elder.

*From Rufinus, chap. 28. Palladius, chap. 19, 20.
and other ancient monuments.*

THE name of *Macarius* is very illustrious in the history of the primitive religious of the deserts of Egypt. We find one of that name attending on St. Antony, in the last fifteen years of his mortal life, and supposed to be one of the two disciples that buried him. But besides him, of whom we know few other particulars, there were two others, greatly celebrated, by all antiquity, for their sanctity, and miracles, both of them co-temporaries with, if not also disciples of St. Antony; and both of them honoured with the priestly character: the *elder*, called by some authors *the Egyptian*; and the *younger*, called *the Alexandrian*, from being a native of Alexandria.

Macarius *the Elder*, or *the Egyptian*, was born in Egypt about the year 300. He retired, when he was young, into a cell near his village, and there began to serve God with such perfection, as to be worthily esteemed by all the neighbourhood; and promoted by his bishop to the lesser orders. But his humility, seeking to decline the office and ministry of a clerk, carried him to a distant place; where he followed without let or hindrance, his call to an anachoretical life: working in the mean time with his hands for his bread, and with his heart all the while conversing in heaven. Here a certain secular, of a religious disposition, observing the faintly life he led, came to him, in order to assist him in selling his baskets, and to minister to him. But as great trials, in one shape or another, are commonly the attendants of, or the forerunners to, the most eminent sanctity, Macarius
here

here met with a very severe one, upon the following occasion.

In the neighbouring village, a young woman was unhappily seduced and corrupted by a fellow of the neighbourhood; and being found with child, by her parents and friends, and interrogated concerning the person, that had corrupted her; she by the suggestion of the devil, said it was that hermite, who passed for a Saint, meaning Macarius. Upon this the whole town was in an uproar: and going out, they dragged the servant of God out of his cell, and brought him into the village, and there hanging potts and pans about his neck, led him about thro' all the highways, publishing aloud to all they met: 'This hermite is 'the villain that has seduced our girl:' and beating him all the way in so unmerciful a manner, that he verily thought he should have died in their hands. Nor did they desist, till upon the remonstrances of an old man, whom they met, they consented to let him go, provided any responsible person would be a surety for his maintaining the girl and her child. His friend, who had followed him all the way, and been insulted on his account, for having given testimony before to his sanctity, undertook to be surety for him: and having delivered him out of their hands, brought him back to his cell. And now he was obliged to redouble his labours night and day, in making baskets, to have withal not only to procure food for himself, but also to furnish a maintenance for the unhappy woman, that had calumniated him. This heavy cross he bore with wonderful chearfulness, till the time came when the young woman fell into labour, and suffered such extraordinary pains for several days, without being able to be delivered, as brought her to a sense of her crime: upon which she acknowledged the wrong she had done to Macarius, and declared withal who was the true father of the child. This presently came to
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the ears of the good man, the friend of the Saint : who run with great joy to declare it to him : adding, that all the people were coming out to beg his pardon, for the wrong they had done him. Macarius hearing this, and being more afraid of honour than of humiliations and disgrace, he would not wait for their coming, but presently withdrew himself into the desert of Scete, or Scithi, being then about thirty years of age.

This desert, in which no man had dwelt before, was of a vast extent, but quite destitute of all commodities of life. It was hard to meet with even any water at all in those burning sands, and the little that was found there was of a very disagreeable smell. Hither Macarius went, by divine inspiration, to seek a solitude, to which no way nor path conducted; and here he began to lay the foundations of that sublime perfection, to which God afterwards raised him; and to which he also brought many others by his means; who in process of time followed him into this frightful wilderness, and put themselves under his discipline. For in a short time their number grew to be considerable: and amongst them were divers eminent Saints. And indeed such was the general character of the solitaries of Scete, for the austerity and sanctity of their lives, that they were looked upon by all the rest as a model of religious perfection. Macarius had been about ten years in this desert; when the number of the brethren encreasing, it was necessary that a priest should be ordained for them, to feed them both with the word of God, and the holy sacraments: on which occasion the Saint was obliged to accept of the priestly order, and to execute its functions amongst his religious: being already so far favoured by divine grace, as to have received from God a power of casting out evil spirits, and of working of other great miracles, together with the spirit of prophecy, and a foreknowledge of things to come.

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As an instance of his prophetic spirit, Palladius relates how he often warned his disciple John against the spirit of covetousness, telling him, that if he did not mortify that unhappy inclination of his to worldly pelf, as he laboured under the vice of Giezi, so he should incur the punishment of Giezi. Which happened accordingly, when fifteen or twenty yeas after the Saint's death, appropriating to himself what should have been given to the poor, he was struck with the leprosy, in so terrible a manner, that there was not one sound place in his body. The same author gives us also instances of his power over evil spirits, in casting them out by his prayers: and of his destroying their magical operations; in the case of a woman that was bewitched in so strange a manner, as to appear to herself, and to her friends, metamorphosed into a mare; but was delivered by the Saint's pouring upon her head some holy water, which he had blessed. The Saint in sending her home, admonished her never to neglect the public worship of the church, nor the frequentation of the sacraments; for that the enemy would not have had this power over her, had she not for five weeks kept away from the sacred mysteries.

Many other great miracles God wrought by his servant Macarius: and some of them of the first magnitude. It happened that a murder was committed in one of the places bordering upon the wilderness, where the man of God abode; and that an innocent man was accused of the murder; who run for refuge to the cell of the Saint: the people pursued after him, and having found him there, were for binding him, and carrying him away to deliver him up to justice. The man strongly pleaded his own innocence; protesting by all that was sacred, that he knew nothing of the murder: but they insisted upon taking him away with them; alledging, that they should be called to an account themselves, if they let him go. Macarius

carius inquired, where they had buried the man that was murdered: and went along with them to the grave. Then kneeling down, and calling upon the name of Jesus Christ, he said to the standers by: The Lord will now shew, whether this man is guilty, or no. Then raising his voice he called the dead man by his name, and conjured him by the name of Christ, to tell if this was the man, that had murdered him. When behold a lowd voice was heard, coming out from the grave: that he was not the man. Upon this all that were present were struck with great fear and astonishment, and fell down to the ground, at the feet of the man of God: desiring him withal that he would put one question more to the deceased, to learn from him, who it was that had killed him? No, said the Saint, it is enough for me to clear the innocent: 'tis not my business to detect the guilty: who knows, but he may have the grace, if he be suffered to live longer, to do serious penance for his crime?

A certain heretick of the sect called *Hieracites* (that had an affinity with the Manicheans) coming into the wilderness, endeavoured to corrupt the faith of the brethren, with his captious arguments, and learned sophistry. This man at length had the boldness to attack the Saint also, upon the score of his faith, in the presence of many of the religious; and to oppose to the solidity of his reasonings from the scripture, delivered with his usual meekness and simplicity, a number of frothy words and sophisms, too apt to impose upon the weak and ignorant. Wherefore the man of God, apprehending lest the faith of the standers by should be in danger, on this occasion, proposed that instead of *contending in words, which would be to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers*, 2. Tim ii. they should go out to the burying place of the religious, and should put the cause upon this issue, that he who should raise a dead man to
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life, should be acknowledged to be the teacher of God's truth; and his faith should be followed. All the hearers applauded the proposition: and the heretick consented to it: but desired that Macarius should be the first to make the trial. When therefore they were come to the graves the Saint prostrating himself on the ground, employed some time in silent prayer: and then lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said: 'Be pleased, O Lord, to shew which of us two holds the right faith, by raising up this dead man to life.' And with this he called by name the brother that had been last buried; who presently answered him out of his grave: and upon opening his sepulchre, and removing all the earth that was laid upon him, was taken out alive, and presented to the man of God; to the great astonishment of the heretick, who immediately fled away; and never durst shew his face any more in Scete.

But to leave the miracles of Macarius, and to pass to his virtues: we find that his eminent sanctity, for which he has been so justly admired by all succeeding ages, was built upon its true foundation, *viz.* the knowledge and contempt of himself, and a profound humility. This shewed itself, by his ever joyfully embracing humiliations, and flying from honours and applause. Those were always the most welcome guests to him, who abused him, or ridiculed him: to these he more freely opened himself: whereas he was silent and reserved, with regard to those, who, when they came to visit him (as many did to hear him speak of the things of God) shewed him any particular marks of honour or esteem. A thing so well known, and observed by many, that at length such as came to visit him, with a desire to hear his heavenly lessons, would on purpose begin their conversation, with telling him the ridiculous, or wicked things, they had heard of him, and what he was said to have been guilty of in his youth: and then they
were

were sure to please him best. The devil himself once acknowledged that it was the humility of the Saint, and not any of his extraordinary austerities, that kept him still out of his reach : when appearing to him one day, as he was going home to his cell, laden with leaves of palms, for his work, he endeavoured to strike him, with a sharp scythe, which he had in his hand, but was not able. Upon which he cried out : ‘ It is a hard case, O Macarius, ‘ that I should suffer so much from thee ; and yet ‘ should not be able to hurt thee : whereas I do a ‘ great deal more than thou dost, in point of fasting ‘ and watching : for though thou fastest, and watchest ‘ often ; yet sometimes thou eatest and sleepest : but ‘ I never eat, nor close my eyes to sleep. But I ‘ own there is one thing, in which thou overcomest ‘ me. And what is that, said the saint ? Oh ! ’tis ‘ thy humility, said the devil : there is nothing else ‘ conquers me.’ With that the Saint stretching forth his hands to heaven in prayer, the enemy presently vanished away.

The humility of the Saint was accompanied with an extraordinary meekness : as these two virtues usually go hand in hand. And this meekness of his wrought greater wonders, in bringing souls to God, than any of his miracles. As it appeared in the case of a pagan priest, who having been excited to fury, by the contemptuous treatment, he had met with from another religious ; was not only appeased, but gained over on the spot to Jesus Christ, by the mildness and sweetness, with which he was treated by St. Macarius : Insomuch that he quitted the world at once, to become a religious man, and gave occasion by his example to the conversion of many other pagans.

The humility of Macarius was also accompanied with a wholesome fear of the divine justice, together with a deep sense of his own sins, and an ex-

traordinary compunction for them ; which continued with him even to the end of his life. As a proof of this, we read, that not long before his death, when the monks of Nitria sent to him, to desire he would come over to their mountain, that they might receive his blessing, before he departed to the Lord ; declaring that otherwise they would all come in a body to visit him : he complied indeed with their request ; but when all the multitude of the brethren were assembled about him, desiring to hear the word of God from his mouth ; instead of a sermon, he entertained them with a flood of tears, saying to them : ‘ Let us weep, brethren, let us weep, whilst we have time. Let our eyes bring forth tears, which may wash away the stains of our sins ; before we depart hence into another world, where our tears shall come too late, and shall only serve to nourish the flames of our torments.’ These words, and the tears of the Saint, made all the congregation weep, and cast themselves down on the ground, to beg the assistance of his prayers.

Another time a certain brother desired an instruction from the Saint, how he might secure the salvation of his soul. ‘ Fly, said the man of God, from the company of men, and keep close to thy cell : and there continually weep for thy sins : and (as the best penance for them) take an equal care to mortify thy tongue, by keeping silence, and thy belly, by fasting and abstinence.’ To the like effect, he said to the brethren, when one day after mass they were coming out of church : ‘ Fly, brethren, fly. Whither, O father, said one of them, wouldst thou have us to fly ? can we go farther from the world, than we are in this vast solitude ? ’ The Saint put his finger to his tongue ; and said, I mean that we should fly from this : and saying no more, he entered into his cell, and there remained in recollection and silence.

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The prayer of St. Macarius was in a manner without ceasing: particularly in the mental and contemplative way. He is said to have been almost always in an extasy, ravished as it were out of himself; and for a greater part, of his time entertaining himself with God, than occupied with any of the things, that are under the heavens. That he might apply himself more freely to God in prayer; he had made a passage under ground, from his cell, to a certain cave, which was at half a furlongs distance: to which he frequently retired, and there kept himself concealed from all other company; to the end, he might be alone with God, free from the interruptions of the many visits of externs, who resorted to him, by occasion of the great reputation of his sanctity. He had, during five years, frequent thoughts, that pressed him, to go further into the desert, to consider what he should see there. As it was his maxim, to do nothing rashly: he examined well these suggestions, lest they should be temptations: but as the inclination still continued with him; taking it to be Gods holy will, he followed the call; and penetrated into the remote parts of the wilderness: where he found a pool of water, and in it a small Island; and two solitaries, who had lived there for forty years, quite separated from all conversation with mortals; and in so great a perfection, that Macarius after having seen and conversed with them; according to his humble way of thinking of himself, professed to the religious of Nitria (when some time after they desired him to make them a discourse of edification, in the monastery of abbot Pambo) that for his part, he was not worthy to be called a *monk*; but that he had seen *monks* indeed. And that the lesson he had learnt of them was, that to be a *monk indeed*, a man must absolutely renounce all things in this world: and that if he thought himself too weak, to practice this renuncia-

tion, in the manner they did, he should go home to his cell, and there sit, and bewail his sins.

The zeal, that Macarius had for his own spiritual advancement, carried him also another time, a fifteen days journey, from the desert of Scete, to visit St. Antony, then residing on his mountain. When he came to the place, quite spent, with his long travelling through those burning sands, he knockt at the door of the Saint's cell: Antony coming out, asked him who he was? And upon his answering that he was Macarius, he went in again, and shut the door upon him. For though he had a great desire, of a long time, to see him, as knowing his extraordinary sanctity; he was willing to make this trial of his patience and humility. Macarius remained at the door, till Antony thinking he had now tried him long enough, opened it to him; and having lovingly embraced him, entertained him with the best that his cell could afford. In the evening, Antony prepared a certain quantity of leaves of palm-trees, for himself to work on, at making of matts: Macarius, who was ever a lover of manual labours, and hated to sit idle, desired to be employed in the same manner: and thus they sat down together, working with their hands, and entertaining one another with heavenly discourses, and with the praises of their great master. In the morning, Antony was surprized to see the quantity of matting, that Macarius had made that night: and taking his hands, he kissed them, affirming, that there was much virtue in those hands. I know not whether it was upon this, or upon some other occasion, that he saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Macarius: for I find it recorded of St. Antony; that he himself declared, he had seen the Holy Ghost come down upon three eminent servants of God; who in their lives appeared to be, in an extraordinary manner, replenished with his graces:
and

and that these three were, St. Athanasius, St. Pachomius, and St. Macarius.

As to the penitential exercises practised by St. Macarius, and by all his disciples the solitaries of Scete; they will appear more to be admired, than imitated; especially in the point of fasting: for we read in some ancient writers, that their custom was to eat but once in the week: and as to St. Macarius himself, he told his disciple Evagrius, upon occasion of his complaining of a violent thirst, which he felt, in the excessive noon-day heat, of the Egyptian climate; that for his own part, for twenty years, he had never satisfied himself, either in point of eating, or drinking, or sleeping: that he always weighed out the little quantity of bread, that he eat; always drank his water by measure; and leaned always against a wall, instead of lying down, when he stole, as it were, the little sleep which he could not absolutely pass without.

But if he was so perfectly mortified, in his eating, drinking and sleeping; we may truly say, he was as much, or more so, in regard to his passions, and his whole interior: and that he diligently practised himself in this respect the excellent lessons, he so often taught his disciples. He used to say, that the *true monk*, was he that overcame himself in all things: that the way to escape the death of the soul by sin, was to receive and embrace contempt, like praise; poverty like riches, and hunger and want, like plenty and feasting. A young man once addressed himself to him, to learn of him, the practise of religious perfection. He sent him to a place, where there were a great many dead bodies; and bid him treat them, with reviling and scornful language, and other such like affronts and injuries; and even to pelt them with stones: to try if he could provoke them to passion. The young man did as he was bidden; and when he came back, the Saint asked him, how the

dead had taken all those outrages? and what they had said? He answered: they had not said one word. On the next day, he sent him again; and bid him treat them with honour, and with fine speeches and praises; and see how they then would behave: and as they still remained equally insensible, both to his good, and his bad treatment. The Saint told him, that if he would be a perfect religious man, he must follow this example; and neither suffer himself to be provoked to anger or resentment, by any ill treatment; nor to be puffed up with the esteem or praises of men: but always to have his eye on Jesus Christ, and only seek to please him.

St. Macarius had now arrived at the age of 76 years; when a violent persecution was raised against all the religious, by Lucius the Arian; who after the death of St. Athanasius, had usurped the see of Alexandria, by the favour of the emperor Valens. This unhappy man, finding the monks in general averse to his wicked tenets, and the people very much influenced, by their example, to adhere to the Catholick faith: led out a multitude of soldiers, into the deserts, in order to oblige these servants of God, by all manner of cruelties, to renounce the ancient faith. A great number of the solitaries of mount Nitria were martyred on this occasion: a great number of other religious, together with many bishops, priests, and deacons, were sent into banishment. Amongst these were Macarius, and his namesake the other St. Macarius of Alexandria, St. Isidore of Scete, and St. Pambo the holy abbot of Nitria: who by the orders of Lucius were taken out of their cells, privately in the night; and carried away into a certain island of Egypt, which was inhabited only by pagans: to the end that they might have no opportunity there, of exercising their priestly functions; nor meet with any comfort, or support from any man. In this island, there was an ancient temple of
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the devils, for which the inhabitants had a great veneration: and it was this that kept them in their idolatry. But see the wonders of God! As soon as the boat, that brought the saints thither, drew near to the land, those devils, that inhabited that temple, were all in an uproar: and one of them presently entered in to the daughter of the priest of the temple, (whom the people venerated almost as much as their god) and caused in her strange and violent agitations and contorsions, accompanied with such lowd screeks and cries, as reached the very heavens, and drew all the people about her. In this condition she run about amongst the people; falling down sometimes, and rolling herself on the ground, foaming, and gnashing with her teeth; till all on a sudden she was lifted up into the air, and carried to the place, where the saints by this time were set on shore: the people all following, to see what would become of her. Here she fell down at the feet of Macarius and his companions; and cried out (the devil speaking by her mouth as he did heretofore by the girl at Phillippi, Acts xvi.) ‘ Ah! ye servants of Jesus Christ, how terrible is your power! ye servants of the great God, why do you come to drive us away from a place, where we have kept so long possession? Here have we hidden ourselves, after we were driven out from the rest of the land: for you have banished us from the towns and villages, from the mountains and hills, and even from the places, where none before you durst inhabit. We expected to be quiet at least in this little island, in the midst of boggs and marshes: and now you are come to deprive us of this our last refuge, &c.’ Whilst the devil was saying these, and other such like things, by the mouth of the girl; the Saints, on their part, made use of the power their Lord had given them; and commanded the devil, by the awful name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to go out.

out. He being unable to resist, was constrained to obey; and departing, left the girl stretched out on the ground, as one dead. The Saints prayed for her; and lifting her up from the ground, presented her to her father, in perfect health, both of mind and body. Then taking occasion from what had passed, they begun to preach Jesus Christ to this people, already disposed, by the miracle they had seen, to hearken to their words. And so great was the blessing God gave to their preaching, that presently both the priest himself, with his daughter, and all his kindred, cast himself down at the feet of these new apostles, desiring to learn of them, what he must do to be saved; and all the people of the island, by their example, were immediately converted to Jesus Christ. They embraced the faith, with so much fervour, that they presently demolished their temple, which they had so much revered, and built up a church in its place, and after proper instructions, received baptism. Thus the banishment of these servants of God, contributed to the propagation, and illustration of the faith, for which they were banished; and to the confusion of their enemies and persecutors; who upon receiving the news of what had passed, gave orders to have them removed again out of the island, and privately conveyed back to their former solitudes.

St. Macarius outlived this persecution many years: and after having attained to the age of ninety years, sixty of which he had spent in the wilderness; he went to enjoy his God, about the year 390, or 391. His name is recorded amongst the Saints, in the Roman martyrology on the fifteenth of January.

There are extant in the *Bibliotheca SS. patrum*, fifty homilies, or discourses of piety, which St. Macarius made to his religious on several occasions, truly worthy of his spirit and sanctity.

S T. M A C A R I U S of Alexandria.

From Palladius, bishop of Helenopolis, sometime disciple of the Saint, Historia Lausiaca, chap. 19. Rufinus and others.

ST. Macarius, commonly called the *Alexandrian*, to distinguish him from the other St. Macarius, of whom we have been treating, was born at Alexandria, about the beginning of the fourth century. In his younger days, he sought an honest livelihood, by selling fruits, sweetmeats, and such like wares. Till being called by God to greater perfection, he left all things, to follow Christ, in an anachoreticall life : and put himself under the direction of St. Antony, in order to learn from so great a master the true science of the saints. The progress he made in this school of grace, was so extraordinary, that he quickly became fit to be himself a master, and a teacher of many others, in the ways of true life : as St. Antony saw and acknowledged, when one day Macarius being with him, and asking him for some beautiful palm branches, which he kept for his work ; he told him it was written : *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours goods* : at which words the palm-branches in an instant all withered away, and grew quite dry, as if they had been touched by the fire. which St. Antony seeing, told Macarius, that he perceived that the Spirit of God had taken up his abode in his soul : and that from this time forward, he should look upon him, as the heir and successor of all those graces and gifts, which the divine bounty had bestowed upon himself.

Sometime after this the devil seeing him in his wilderness, exceedingly fatigued with travelling, and quite spent for want of food, suggested to him :
 ‘ since thou hast received the grace of Antony, why
 ‘ dost

‘ dost not thou make use of his power ; and ask of
 ‘ God for food and strength ; that thou mayst be able
 ‘ to go on thy way ? The Saint replied. The Lord
 ‘ is my strength. The Lord is my glory : but for
 ‘ thy part be gone Satan ; and dont thou pretend to
 ‘ tempt one that is determined to be the servant of
 ‘ his divine majesty.’ The devil upon this took
 the shape of a camel, that appeared to be wandering
 about in the desert, laden with all kind of necessa-
 ries for life ; and coming up he stood near to the
 Saint : who suspecting it to be a diabolical illusion,
 prayed to God, and presently the phantom sunk into
 the earth, and disappeared.

From the desert of Thebais, where St. Antony
 resided, Macarius passed to that of Scete : and partly
 here ; partly on mount Nitria, or in the neighbouring
 wilderness, called Cellia (or the place of the cells) he spent
 the greatest part of his mortal life. In this last place,
 he was, on account of his eminent sanctity, ordained
 priest : and in that quality had the charge of the
 church, that was there ; and the superiority, and di-
 rection of all those faintly souls, that lived dispersed
 in separate cells, in that holy solitude. Here he
 shone forth with such extraordinary virtues, and
 great miracles, as to have been looked upon, both
 then, and ever since, as one of the brightest lights
 of the church of God in his time : and on that ac-
 count, he had also a great share in the persecution,
 which under Valens the Arian emperour, fell in a
 particular manner upon the religious of these quar-
 ters. When also, as we have seen above, he was
 sent into banishment, with some other eminent ser-
 vants of God ; and by miracle converted the inha-
 bitants of the island, to which they were banished,
 from idolatry to the faith of Christ.

As to the employment of his time, in these wilder-
 nesses, we find he distributed it in such manner, as
 to give a good part of it to prayer ; in which he ex-
 exercised

exercised himself a hundred times in the four and twenty hours: another part of it he gave to manual labours, in order for his livelyhood; and the remainder he gave to them, that came to consult him, about the affairs of their souls, and to receive instructions from him. In the mean time, the austerities of a penitential life, to which he condemned himself, were so great, that we may truly say, they are much more to be admired than imitated. His fasts were long and rigorous: for seven years he never eat any thing but raw herbs or pulse, moistened in cold water, without any bread, or any thing that had come near the fire. For three other years, he lived only upon four or five ounces of bread in a day, with water in proportion. Once for the space of twenty days, he laboured to live without any sleep at all: and to this purpose, for all that time, he entred not under any covert; but exposed himself all the day long to the parching heat of the sun; and all the night to the cold air abroad: till he could hold out no longer, and was constrained to yield to nature. Another time, to penance himself for a fault, that was very small, or none at all, (or, as others say, to extinguish a temptation of the flesh) he condemned himself to pass six whole months, in the marshes of Scete, in the remote parts of the desert: where there is a number of large Gnats, with stings like wasps; by which, during this his course of penance, he was so roughly treated, and stung in so terrible a manner, that at his return home, his whole body was like that of a leper, and he could not be known but by his voice.

The great reputation of the extraordinary austerities, and the excellent lives of the religious of Tabenna, under their holy founder St. Pachomius, inspired Macarius with a desire of going, and joining their holy company; yet so as not be known by them, who, or what he was. In order to this, changing
his

his habit for the dress of a common labourer, he travelled fifteen days journey, through the desarts, till he came to the monastery of Tabenna. Here calling for the abbot St. Pachomius, he begged to be admitted amongst his monks. The abbot told him, that at his time of life, he could not be able to conform himself to the austerities, which were practised in that monastery : and therefore he refused to admit him. However Macarius did not desist ; but continued for seven days at the gate, begging for admittance, and fasting the whole time ; till his perseverance prevailed with the abbot and community to receive him in. And now the penitential time of Lent was come : in which the religious appointed to themselves the particular exercises of devotion and penance, in which they designed to pass that holy time : some of them resolving to eat but once in two days ; others but twice, in a week ; others again, after spending the whole day in manual labours, proposing to watch, and pass the night in prayer, without lying down at all. Macarius for his part said nothing ; but gathering together a large provision of the leaves of palm-trees for making of matts, he passed the whole time, standing in a corner by himself, at his work, with his heart raised to God in silent prayer ; without so much as once sitting down, or leaning on any thing whatsoever ; and only eating on the Lord's day, and then nothing but some raw leaves of cabbage, without any bread, or any thing else, or even drinking any thing at all. The rest of the religious, seeing him practise these extraordinary austerities, began to murmur against their abbot, for having brought in amongst them, for their condemnation, a man that seemed not to be made of flesh and blood : whereupon St. Pachomius, who was frequently favoured with divine revelations, applying himself to God in prayer, with a desire to know who this person was, that had passed lent in this extraordinary manner ;

manner; learnt from God that it was the abbot Macarius, of whose sanctity he had heard so much. Whereupon taking him by the hand, and leading him into the chappel, where the altar of the monastery was, he said to him : ‘ Is it then you, venerable father? You are the celebrated Macarius : and you would not let me know it. It is a long time, that I have had a desire to see you : and now I must return you thanks, for the stay you have made amongst us ; by which you have humbled my children, and taught them not to think much of their own performances. You have sufficiently edified us by your presence : I beg of you now to return home, and there to pray for us.’ And so he dismissed the Saint, to go back to his former habitation.

But if these rigorous penances, and extraordinary austerities of St. Macarius may seem to be out of the reach of our imitation ; we cannot say the same with regard to the following instance, of the spirit, as well of mortification, as of charity, which both he and his shewed upon a lesser occasion ; as it is recorded in the history of his life. Some one brought him a fine bunch of grapes, at a time when he had a longing desire after that kind of fruit. But to exercise himself at once both in abstinence and charity, he sent them to another solitary ; who being sick and infirm stood more in need of them. This good man, after thankfully receiving the present, (which if he would have followed his own inclinations, he would gladly have eaten,) through the same spirit of mortification, and charity, refrained from them, and sent them away to a third, who lived at some distance in the wilderness ; and this third again to a fourth ; and so on, till they had passed from one to another, to most of the holy inhabitants of the cells, dispersed thro’ that desert, without any one’s tasting of them At length he that received them last,
not

not knowing from whom they first came, and thinking they might be agreeable to their holy father, sent them to St. Macarius. The Saint perceiving the grapes to be the very same, and learning also by enquiry, how many hands they had passed through; gave God thanks for that spirit of abstinence and self-denial, which his brethren had shewed on this occasion; and for his own part, was animated thereby to a greater fervour in all the exercises of a spiritual life. But after all he would not be induced to eat of the grapes himself.

As to the miracles of this Saint, church history assures us, that the two Saints Macarius were equally illustrious, not only for the works of faith, but also for the miraculous graces, and other supernatural gifts, with which God favoured them: that they equally excelled in the knowledge of the secrets of God; and in the power, which they had to make themselves terrible to the devils, to cure diseases, and to work all kind of wonders. It is particularly recorded of our Saint, that he had an extraordinary grace, in casting out unclean spirits, and delivering numbers, that were possessed or obsessed by them. The tempter took occasion from hence to suggest to him one day thoughts of vain glory, which tended to draw him out of his solitude, under the specious pretext of doing good to many; and to carry him to Rome; that he might exercise there his talent in casting out devils, and curing all diseases, in that great capital of the universe. Macarius saw through the deceit, and strongly resisted the suggestion. And as the temptation did not cease, but still grew stronger and stronger upon him, he laid himself down on the threshold of his cell, and cried out to the demon of vain glory, that tempted him: that there he would lie till the evening: and that if he would have him from thence, it should be by main force: for that with his good will, he would never
go,

go, how much soever he might tempt him. After sunset, finding the temptation coming on again more violently than ever, he took a large basket, that held two bushels, and filling it with sand, laid it on his shoulders, and being loaded in this manner walked up and down in the desert. Theosebius surnamed Cosmetor, a native of Antioch, met him whilst he was at this exercise, and asked him : ‘ What is the meaning of this holy father ? Why ‘ do you thus torment yourself ? Let me ease you ‘ of your burthen. Macarius replied : I am plaguing one, that is plaguing me ; and who seeing that ‘ I am lazy at home, will needs have me go and ‘ travel abroad : ’ and thus he continued carrying about his load of sand, till being quite wearied and spent, and all bruised, with his burthen, he returned to his cell.

As to the particulars of all the miracles wrought by St. Macarius, we shall not pretend to set them down here : we shall only take notice of one, recorded by Palladius, of which, he was an eye witness. This prelate relates, that being at that time himself a disciple of the Saint, he came one day to his cell, and found there lying before the door, a priest of a country parish, in the most wretched condition that can be imagined ; his head being eaten in such manner by a cancer, that a great part of his skull was seen quite bare. He came thither to seek his cure from the Saint : but he would not take any notice at all of him. Upon which Palladius going in, began to interceed for him. The Saint answered, that he was unworthy to be delivered from this evil, which God had sent him for his punishment. ‘ But, said he, if you desire he should ‘ be cured, prevail on him to make a resolution never more to presume to approach to the altar, to celebrate the sacred mysteries. For this punishment, ‘ has been sent him, because being guilty of sins of
K ‘ impurity

‘impurity he has said mass in that condition.’ Palladius told the poor man what the Saint had said: upon which he promised with an oath that he would never more meddle with any of the priestly functions. Upon this promise the Saint received him in, and after he had confessed his sins, with a sincere resolution of never more returning to them; he laid his hands upon him, and in a few days sent him home perfectly cured, and glorifying God.

As to the other extraordinary gifts and graces of St. Macarius; it is recorded of him, that he often saw in spirit the state of the souls of his religious, at the time of their communion: as also their inward thoughts, and dispositions in the time of prayer. One night the devil knockt at the door of his cell, calling out to him: ‘Get up, abbot Macarius, that we may go with the brethren to the midnight prayers. The Saint knowing, by the light of God, that it was the enemy, replied: And what hast thou to do, O lying spirit, enemy of all truth, with the assembly of the Saints, and with their night prayers? O said the devil, assure thyself Macarius, that the religious never meet to their prayers, without us. Come along, and thou shalt see our works.’ The Saint prayed to God, that he might know whether what the devil vaunted of, was true or no. Then going to the place, where the brethren were assembled for the night office; at the time they were reciting the psalms, he saw a number of these wicked spirits, in the shape of little filthy blackamoors, running about the church; and playing a thousand tricks, to disturb and distract the religious; or to make them heavy to sleep: and when after the twelve psalms were ended, they prostrated themselves in silent prayer; he perceived how busy the same little blacks were about them, representing to one the figure of a woman, to another a building, or a journey, and to others a great variety of such like shows and images.

images. Now some there were of the brethren, that seemed to push these blacks away from them, by a superior force, and to fling them down upon their backs, with so much violence, that they durst not come near them any more: whilst others, more indolent and negligent, suffered them to ride upon their heads and shoulders, and to make a mockery of them at pleasure. The Saint was much moved with this spectacle, and addressed himself to God, with many tears, in behalf of his religious; begging he would deliver them from all the snares and deceits of these spirits of darkness: using those words of the royal prophet Ps. lxxvii. *Let God arise, and his enemies be scattered: and let them that hate him flee from before his face.* Then after the prayers were ended, calling to him the brethren, he found, by enquiring of each one in particular, that they had been distracted in the time of prayer, with those same vain, or wicked imaginations, which the Saint had seen represented to them by those blacks. Hence they came to understand, that those distracting thoughts, which so often interrupt the attention and devotion of the soul, in the divine office, and other prayers, are illusions of these wicked spirits; and that the true way to repell them, and to keep them at a distance, is to watch over ourselves in the time of prayer, and to keep our souls united to God, by a fervent application of all our powers to him.

'Tis also recorded of Saint Macarius, that one day being in company with the other Saint of the same name, and obliged to pass over the river Nile, in the barge, or ferry that served for that purpose; it happened that two tribunes or colonels, were ferried over at the same time, having with them a pompous equipage, and a great retinue. These officers, seeing the two Saints, in their poor garb, at one end of the barge, with all that serenity, recollection, and inward peace, which seemed to be painted on their

faces, together with a sovereign contempt of all that this world admires; could not help extolling to one another the happiness of such a kind of life, as that was which these servants of God led. And one of them addressing himself to the Saints, said: 'You two are happy, who are thus above the world, and tread it under your feet.' 'You speak as if it were by a prophetic light, replied our Saint, in calling us *happy*; for the name of both of us is *Macarius*, which in the greek signifies *happy*. But if you have great reason to say, that they who have renounced all things else, to consecrate themselves entirely to the service of God, are happy, inasmuch as they tread the world under their feet: we have also great reason to pity and compassionate your unhappiness, in being slaves to the world, and letting yourselves be mocked by it.' These words of the Saint made such an impression upon this colonel, that returning home, he gave up his commission, distributed his substance to the poor, and leaving the world, embraced a solitary and religious life.

We shall conclude our account of the life of St. Macarius, with a remarkable history, recorded by St. Jerome; of a certain solitary of Nitria, who of the price of his work, which was making linnen cloth, had saved so much money, that when he died, there was found by him, the sum of one hundred crowns. The religious were assembled, on this extraordinary occasion, to deliberate what should be done with this money: which some thought should be given to the poor, or to the church; and others to the kindred of the deceased. But Macarius (our Saint) and Pambo and Isidore, and the others, who were called the fathers, being inspired by the Holy Ghost, ordained that they should cast the money into the grave together with the corps, repeating those words, of St. Peter to Simon Ma-
gus,

gus. *Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee.* And this wholesome severity spread such a terrour amongst all the religious of Egypt, that they looked upon it as a crime for any one of them to leave so much as one crown after their death.

St. Macarius departed to our Lord, (after having served him for sixty years at least in a religious life) about the year 395. His name is registered in the Roman martyrology on the second of January.



S T. I S I D O R E A N D S T. P A M B O .

WE join these two together, and give them a place immediately after St. Macarius; with whom, as we have seen above, they are joined by St. Jerome; as having been the most eminent in their days amongst the fathers of the desarts, and men inspired by the Holy Ghost. With whom also, and with the other, St. Macarius, they are celebrated by all our church historians, for the brave stand they made against the Arian heresy, under Valens the emperor; and for the persecutions they suffered on this occasion; as well as for the eminence of their sanctity, and the great signs and wonders, which God wrought by them. They were both of them sometime disciples of St. Antony; and both of them afterwards for their extraordinary virtues and merits, advanced to the priestly dignity; and made chief superiors; the one, (Isidore) of the religious of the desert of Scete; the other, (Pambo) of those of mount Nitria.

'Tis recorded of St. Isidore, that he had received so singular a grace from God, and so great a power and virtue against all evil spirits; that whensoever any persons were brought to him, that were possessed by the devil, they never failed to be delivered, even before they reached the door of his cell. And as the brethren asked him one day, what should be the reason, why the devils were so much afraid of him? He alledged no other but this; that from the time of his entring into religion, he had made it his constant endeavour, not to suffer the passion of anger to rise up in him so high, as to reach his tongue. As a proof of his zeal for suppressing in himself every motion of this passion, we are informed by an ancient writer, that when he had one day carried some little baskets to market for sale, upon
meeting

meeting there with some provocation, which began to excite in his heart the first motions of wrath; he immediately flung down his baskets, and ran away, as fast as he could, to the wilderness. By his diligence, in watching against, and suppressing all the irregular motions, and suggestions of his passions; and by the help of continual prayer, he arrived at so great a mastery over himself, that he acknowledged one day, to the greater glory of God, that for the space of forty years, though he had often experienced the motions and suggestions of sin, he was not conscious to himself, that he had ever given voluntary consent, either to any irregular desire, or to any motion of wrath.

From his first entring into religion, instead of setting himself a task, as many did, of a certain number of psalms, or prayers, to be daily recited: he chose rather to be always praying, night and day. And yet he was always a great lover and follower of manual labours: insomuch that even after he was grown very old, he could not be prevailed upon to leave off working, not even when night was come. And when the brethren, upon these occasions, would be sometimes begging of him, to give himself a little more rest. He replied that all he could do, or suffer, was nothing in comparison with what the Son of God had done and suffered for him; and therefore he thought he could never do, nor suffer enough, for the love of his Saviour. He said one day to the assembly of the solitaries of Scete: ‘Are we not come
‘hither my brethren, in order to suffer, in this place,
‘many labours and pains in the body, by the means of
‘which we may merit the everlasting rest of the soul, in
‘heaven. And yet how little is it we suffer here at
‘present? For my part, I think of taking my sheep-
‘skin, and seeking out some other place, where I
‘may have something more to suffer.’ Which he said, because by this time, the number of them, that

resorted to this desert, had given occasion to the introducing there certain conveniences of life, and some better accommodations, than they had been accustomed to in the beginning, when they were in a manner quite destitute of all things.

'Tis also recorded as a maxim of St. Isidore. 'That
' the whole science of the Saints, is to study, to know,
' (and to follow,) the holy will of God : because then
' only can a man be perfect indeed, when, getting up
' above all other things, he subjects himself to the
' eternal Truth and Justice. For since man was made
' after the image and likeness of God, who is that
' same eternal Truth and Justice, he cannot meet with
' either perfection or happiness, but only in conformity with his original. On the other hand, he
' said, that the most dangerous of all temptations,
' was to follow ones own heart, and ones own
' thoughts, instead of the will of God : that the
' pleasure which a man pretended to find, in gratifying his own inclinations, was quickly changed
' into bitterness; and left nothing behind it, but the
' regret of having been ignorant of the secret of
' true beatitude, and of the way of the Saints. From
' whence he concluded, that the true way to happiness, was to be willing now to labour, and to
' take pains in the service of the Lord ; and to suffer the short tribulations of this life, for the securing the eternal salvation of the soul, by the
' exercise of patience.

This Saint had also a great grace from God, for the spiritual cure of the religious, if any of them were diseased in their souls. Insomuch that if it happened at any time, that the other superiors were for dismissing any of their subjects, by reason of their negligence, slothfulness impatience, passion, or other defects, he desired they might be brought to him : and by treating them with his usual charity, humility, and patience ; he brought them to a right sense

sense of their duty, and in time cured them of their vices, and faults, of what kind soever.

When Theophilus was made patriarch of Alexandria (anno 385) St. Isidore went to make him a visit. After his return to the wilderness, the brethren enquired of him what news he brought from the city? He told them, he had seen no body there but the patriarch. They were surprized at his answer: and asked him, what then was become of all the people of that great city? Surely, said they, they are not all swallowed up with an earth-quake? This obliged him to explain himself: by letting them know, that he had kept that guard upon his eyes, that he had not allowed them to look upon any one.

St. Isidore departed to our Lord in a good old age not long after this, (the particular year is not known) and his name stands recorded in the Roman martyrology, on the fifteenth of January.

Amongst divers great men of the name of Isidore, there was another, who was cotemporary with our Saint; and was abbot in Thebais, over a thousand monks, who lived in great reputation of sanctity, under a strict enclosure, so that neither any of them were allowed to go out at any time, nor any one from abroad to come in amongst them; except he came to stay with them for good and all, and never more to go out. They had gardens and wells within their own inclosure: and if there were any necessity of any thing from abroad, there were two of the ancients deputed to provide such necessaries; all the rest attending only to their regular exercises.

To come now to St. Pambo: 'tis recorded of him, that being in his younger days a disciple of St. Antony, he desired his master to give him some lessons for the saving his soul. St. Antony told him, that in order to this, he must take care to do true penance for his sins: that he must never have any confidence at all in his own righteousness: that he must labour

labour to act in every thing in such manner, as to have no occasion afterwards to repent of what he had done : and that in particular he must labour to put a restraint, upon his tongue, and upon his appetite.

In those days, he also applied himself to another of the religious, to learn of him some of the psalms. This brother began with the thirty-eighth psalm : *I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.* Which words Pambo had no sooner heard, but without waiting for the second verse, he retired to his cell, saying, that was enough for one lesson ; and that he would go, and endeavour to learn it in practice. Six months after this the brother, seeing that he did not come to him for any more lessons, asked him the meaning why he staid away so long from him. O brother, said he, I have not yet perfectly learnt, in practice, the first verse, which you taught me. Many years after this, one of his friends asked him, if he had not now at least learnt his lesson ? To whom he answered, that with much ado, he had scarce been able yet to compass it, with nineteen years continual application. However by his perpetual attention, not to offend in his words, he arrived at length at so great perfection in this particular, that he is thought in this to have equalled, or even to have excelled St. Antony himself. When any one consulted him, either upon any passage of the Scripture, or any other spiritual matter, he never would answer upon the spot, but desired time to consider on it. He employed sometimes whole months, on these occasions, in examining before God what answer he should give. But then his answers which he returned, carried with them so much weight, and were so holy, that they were received by all, like oracles dictated by heaven.

St. Pambo did not continue always with St. Antony : but leaving Thebais, he took up his abode,
either

either in the desert of Scete, as some say, or in that of Nitria, where he had a monastery on the mountain. He was also for some time in the wilderness of the Cells: where Rufinus says, he went to receive his benediction (anno 374.) As to his exterior practices: St. Pemen used to relate, that he had remarked three things in St. Pambo, which he judged to be very extraordinary: *viz.* his fasting on all days till the evening; his continual silence; and his great diligence in manual labours. He also related, that St. Antony had given testimony in favour of St. Pambo, that the fear of God, which possessed his soul, had made the Spirit of God to take up his resting place in him. The eminent grace of his interior is said to have broke forth, and shewed itself in his exterior; by a certain majesty in his face, and a kind of light, like what we read of Moses; so that a person could not look steadfastly on his face. He often begged of God, for the space of three whole years, that he would not glorify him in this manner upon earth. But his divine majesty, instead of hearing him in this particular, chose rather to establish in him an humility so profound, as not to be altered, or any ways prejudiced by this glory.

St. Athanasius once desired St. Pambo, to come from his desert to Alexandria (in order to confound the Arians, by the testimony given by so holy a man, to the divinity of Jesus Christ) upon which occasion 'tis recorded of him, that seeing in the city an actress, dressed up in an extraordinary manner, for the stage; he wept bitterly: and being asked the reason of his tears? he answered that he wept partly for the wretched condition of that unhappy woman, and the loss of her soul: and partly to think, that for his own part, he did not take so much pains to please God, as she took to make herself agreeable to sinful men.

Palladius

Palladius relates, in the tenth chapter of his *Historia Lausiaca*, that Melania the elder, a noble Roman lady, coming into Egypt, and hearing of the sanctity of St. Pambo, went to visit him in his monastery on mount Nitria: and took with her three hundred pounds weight of silver, which she presented to him; desiring he would accept of some part of the store, with which God had blessed her. The holy man was sitting at his work, making matts, when she came in, accompanied with Isidore, the administrator of the hospital of Alexandria: and without interrupting his work, or looking at her, or her present; he contented himself with telling her, God would reward her charity. Then turning to his disciple, he said: 'Take this, and distribute it amongst the brethren, that are in Lybia, and in the Islands; whose monasteries are the most poor of all: but give no part of it, to the monasteries of Egypt; because this country is more rich and abounds more in all things.' The Lady stood still, expecting that he would give her his benediction; or express at least his esteem for so considerable a present, by word, or other sign: but seeing that he went on with his work, without once casting so much as an eye towards the chest of money, which she had given him; she said to him: 'Father I dont know, whether you are aware, that here is three hundred pounds weight of silver?' Daughter, said he, (without once taking off his eye from his work) he to whom you made this offering, very well knows how much it weighs; without your telling him. If indeed you had given it to me, you might have had some reason to tell me its weight: but if you designed it as an offering to God, who did not disdain the poor widows two mites, and even preferred them before the large offerings of the rich, don't say any more about it.' This passage Melania herself related to Palladius.

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When Theophilus was made patriarch of Alexandria, he went to visit the religious of mount Nitria; who were all assembled on this occasion, to do honour to the patriarch. They desired St. Pambo, as their superior, to make some discourse to this prelate, with which he might be edified: the holy abbot, agreeably to his maxims, and practice, replied: 'If he is not edified with my silence, I shall never edify him with my words.' The Saint did not long survive this visit: Melania was present at his death; to whom he bequeathed, by way of legacy, a basket which he had finished just at that time. When he was near his end, he blessed God, that from the time of his first coming into that wilderness (of Nitria) and building himself a cell there, he had never been burthened to any one; having always earned his own bread with the labour of his hands: and that he could not recollect any one word that he had spoken, which he had afterwards repented of: nevertheless, said he, I am now going to the Lord, as one that hath not yet begun to serve him. He died without any sickness, or pain, or the least fever, or agony: and the same Melania took care for his burial; and carried away with her the basket, he had given her, which she kept till her death.

There was also another abbot Pambo, or rather Pammon, whose monastery was in the neighbourhood of Antinoe; one greatly esteemed by St. Athanasius: who together with St. Theodore (disciple and successor of St. Pachomius, in the monastery of Tabenna) accompanied this Saint, when he was flying from the persecution of Julian: and who together with the same St. Theodore, assured him, on this occasion, by prophetic light, that his persecutor was now actually slain in Persia; and had for his successor in the empire, one that was a good Christian, but whose reign should be short. All which was found to be punctually true. This holy man,
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not long after this, departed to our Lord, full of years and good works : and St. Athanasius in a discourse he made, in the great church of Alexandria, in the presence of his own clergy, and of many bishops, has given a most ample testimony to his extraordinary sanctity : declaring that he was indeed a great man of God, and worthy to be compared with St. Antony himself.



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S T. JULIAN S A B B A S.

From Theodoret, in his Philotheus, or Religious History, chap. 2.

ST. Julian, surnamed *Sabbas*, or *the venerable father*, was a native of Mesopotamia : who, following the divine call, withdrew himself, in his youth, from the world, and took up his habitation in a den or cavern, in a vast wilderness, on the borders of Osrhoena : a place, on many accounts, inconvenient to live in ; but preferred by him, for the sake of the solitude, before all the palaces of the world. Here he undertook a life of perpetual penance, and perpetual prayer : eating but once in the week, and then only some coarse bread, made of millet, with a little salt ; and drinking a small quantity of water, at his meal, but never to the quenching of his thirst : but continually feeding his soul, with the singing of psalms, in which he took great delight, and with an interiour conversation with God in prayer : by means of which, the divine love took such possession of his heart, that he had no relish for any worldly thing ; but night and day was ever thinking of his beloved ; insomuch, that even in his sleep, he could dream of nothing else.

The great reputation of the saintly life, he led in the desert, drew by degrees many disciples to him, who were desirous to learn of him the science of salvation. He received them all into his cavern, and trained them up to an imitation of the exercises, which he himself followed : teaching them to neglect all care and solicitude for this perishable carcass, and to be content, to lodge, and to eat like himself. However, as their number encreased, and as the dampness of the cavern spoiled the little provisions of pickelled herbs, which they made for the infirm :

infirm : he consented they should build a hut for the preservation of them. He went out at this time (as he frequently did for greater solitude, and recollection in prayer) to a distant part of the wilderness ; employing several days by himself in spiritual exercises : and at his returning home, finding they had made a larger building than he had directed, he told them : ‘ I fear, brethren, lest whilst we are enlarg-
‘ ing our earthly dwelling, which we can occupy
‘ but for a short time, we should suffer any detri-
‘ ment, with regard to our heavenly mansions, which
‘ are eternal.

The method of prayer, and of performing the divine office, which this Saint taught his disciples, was as follows. They all sung together, within the cave, before it was day, hymns and psalms to the divine praise. Then early in the morning they went out into the wilderness, two by two, and there observed this manner of worship : one of them sung fifteen psalms, standing upright, whilst the other lay prostrate on the ground, in silent prayer and adoration ; till the fifteen psalms being ended, he that had sung them, in his turn prostrated himself on the ground, and adored, whilst his companion, rising up, sung other fifteen psalms. And thus alternatively singing and adoring, they passed a good part of the day. Before sunset, they gave themselves a little rest : then meeting all together in the cave, they sung their evening hymns, to the praises of their creator.

As to the Saint himself, he made, as we have said, frequent excursions, to a far greater distance from his cave ; and spent eight or ten days together, in the remoter parts of the wilderness, in his spiritual exercises. On these occasions, he often took with him one of his brethren, particularly a holy man, whose name was James, a native of Persia : but then he desired his companion to keep himself always at
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a distance from him, that he might be no occasion of distraction to him in his devotions. One time when James the Persian was following him in the wilderness, he found a monstrous serpent, lying dead in the way; which the Saint had killed, by the sign of the cross: as he acknowledged, upon his disciples putting it home to him; but with a strict injunction to keep the matter a secret, during his life. Another time when Asterius (a young religious, who had more courage than strength) had by his importunity obtained leave to accompany him, in one of those excursions; and that in the greatest heat of the summer, which in those deserts is very violent; after two or three days, the young man was so parched up with thirst, the sun continually beating upon him, and no water being to be found in those sands, that he was just upon the point of perishing, had not the Saint, by his prayers and tears, obtained of the Father of mercies, that a fountain of water should spring up, to save the young man's life, in the very place which he had sprinkled with his tears. Which fountain, saith Theodoret, continues to flow to this day. This same Asterius was afterwards one of the most illustrious amongst the disciples of St. Julian; and propagated the holy discipline he had learnt of his master, by founding a famous monastery near Gindare, in the territory of Antioch, where he trained up many souls to religious perfection.

But these were not the only miracles, wrought by the prayers of St. Julian: he frequently cast out devils, and healed divers diseases. To fly the concourse of people, which the fame of his sanctity and miracles brought to him, and the honours they shewed him, which were troublesome to his humility; he withdrew himself from his Mesopotamian cavern: and taking with him some of his disciples, with necessary provisions for a long journey; he travelled as far as mount Sinai, in Arabia: taking care not

to pass through any town, or village, in the whole way. Here he took up his habitation : being charmed with this holy solitude, and the tranquillity he here enjoyed. But after having built a church, or oratory, and sanctified for some time this new residence, with his holy exercises of prayer and penance ; it was the will of God he should return again to his disciples, whom he had left behind him in his former habitation.

Here he was informed of the threats of Julian the apostate (who was then engaged in his expedition against the Persians) and of his impious designs against the church of Christ, if he should return with victory. Whereupon, to divert this impending storm, he employed ten whole days in most fervent prayer, to implore the divine mercy, and protection for the church. At the end of which time he learnt by divine revelation, the unhappy death of that prince, and declared the same to his disciples.

Valens, an Arian, succeeding not long after to the empire, was a great persecuter of the church ; and an earnest promoter of such as were addicted to his heresy. In his time the Arians made a great havock in the church of Antioch : where also they had the impudence to publish, that St. Julian was in their sentiments. Upon this occasion, the Saint, at the request of the Catholics, leaving his desert, took a journey to Antioch, to bear testimony to the faith, and to repress the insolence of the heretics. In his way thither, he miraculously preserved the life of a child of a good woman, that entertained him at her house ; who by accident was fallen into a deep well, and given over for lost : but was found sitting and playing upon the water, and being drawn out, declared he had seen the Saint all the while holding him up, and keeping him from sinking to the bottom of the well. When he arrived at Antioch, great multitudes flockt about him, from all parts ;

parts ; some to see the man, so much renowned for his sanctity ; others to seek by his prayers a deliverance from the evils, with which they were afflicted. Here it pleased God, that he himself should be seized by a violent fever. But as the Catholics apprehended, lest the people should be shocked on this occasion : at their desire, he prayed to God, that if his recovery might be of any service to the church, he would be pleased to restore him to health. His prayer was immediately followed by a sweat, which carried off his fever ; and he presently recovered. Many others were healed by his prayers upon the spot : after which, he went to the place (out of town) where the faithful assembled to their devotions. In his way he passed before the gate of the emperor's palace : where a poor cripple, who had no use at all of his legs or thighs, was instantly cured by the touch of his garment ; so as to rise up immediately, and to leap, and run. This miracle being noised abroad, brought an immense crowd about the Saint ; to the great confusion of the Arians, whose impostures were now clearly discovered, and confuted, by the testimony the Saint publicly gave to the catholic truth ; and by his confirming it with evident miracles, which they could not contradict : especially as the count, or governor of all the oriental district (who being grievously ill had sent for the Saint) was one of those who were miraculously cured by him.

In his return home from Antioch, he passed through Cyrus, the city, of which Theodoret was afterwards bishop. Here the faithful represented to him the danger they were in from one Asterius, an Arian, who had been intruded upon them for a bishop : and who was preparing a sermon against the faith of the Trinity, to impose upon them by his eloquent sophistry. The Saint exhorted them to fasting and prayer : and joining with them in these spiritual exercises, by his interest with heaven, he

procured, that Asterius was suddenly seized upon with a mortal illness, which within four and twenty hours, hurried him before the judgment seat of Christ: on the very eve of the festival, on which he designed to have preached his impious doctrine, in the cathedral of that city.

The Saint after this returned to his solitude, and there continued his accustomed exercises: till having attained to a good old age, he exchanged his mortal pilgrimage for a happy immortality. He is spoken of, with great elogium, by St. Jerome, Epist. 13, and by St. John Chrysostome, writing upon the epistle to the Ephesians. His name is recorded in the Roman martyrology, January 14.



S T. A B R A H A M.

From his life by St. Ephrem.

ST. Abraham was born [in Mesopotamia, about the year 300] of parents abounding in worldly riches; who loved him tenderly, and from his childhood, provided him with a worldly spouse, to whom they promised him in marriage; designing to procure him an advantageous settlement, according to the world; and desiring nothing more than to see him advanced to some post of honour, or worldly dignity. But God had other designs upon him; who inspired him with the love of purity, and an early affection to the practices of piety, and devotion. He was remarkably diligent in frequenting the church; and in attending there to the holy scriptures, and carrying home with him the divine lessons, he there heard; and meditating on them day and night. When he was come to man's estate, his parents made such strong instances with him, to marry the girl, to whom they had before contracted him, that after having resisted for some time, he was perfectly constrained to acquiesce to their will. But after celebrating the wedding feast, when the night came on, a ray of divine light penetrated his heart, accompanied with a strong call, to quit all for the love of God; which he immediately followed: and rising up, leaving both his spouse (untouched) and his father's house; he went to some distance off, and hid himself in an empty cell, which he found fit for his purpose; and there with great joy, began to sing hymns of praise to his deliverer.

His parents and worldly friends, not knowing what was become of him, made all the search they could after him; and after seventeen days, found him in his cell, at his prayers. But as they saw him

fixed in his resolution to stay there; in order to bewail, as he said, his sins, and to dedicate the remainder of his life to prayer and penance; they left him to follow the call of God, and returned home. He desired at parting, that they would not come, under pretence of visiting him, to interrupt his spiritual exercises: and to the end that he might have as little communication as possible with the world, he shut himself up in his cell, walling up the door; and only leaving a little window, through which he received, from time to time, the slender provisions which maintained his life. Here he lived free from the cares and distractions of the world, in great austerity, (abstaining even from bread) in watchings, in penitential tears, in the continual practice of a profound humility, and of a wonderful charity, and meekness, (which he shewed, without respect of persons, to all the world): without ever changing, for the space of so many years, as he continued in this solitude; without ever remitting, or being wearied, with his long penance; but rather finding an unspeakable sweetness in it, with which he was never satisfied. He considered every day, as if it were to be the day of his death: he suffered not so much as one day to pass, without weeping: but was never seen to laugh. And yet with all this austerity, and continual mortification, he kept always a fresh countenance, an agreeable air, and a strength and vigour of body, which must have come from grace, and not from the slender nourishment he allowed himself. His very habit, not without a kind of a miracle, was not worn out, in all the fifty years, that he followed this penitential course of life.

The reputation of his sanctity brought many, of all conditions, to him; to whom he gave admirable lessons, for their spiritual profit. For our Lord had rewarded his early piety, with the gifts of wisdom and understanding, in an eminent degree; so that his
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light shone forth to all that came near him, for their instruction and edification. In the mean time his parents dying (when he had been about ten years in this solitude) left him their worldly substance, and great riches: which he desired a friend of his to charge himself with, and to dispose of all in alms and other pious uses; to the end that he himself might, not be distracted, or interrupted in his spiritual exercises, with any temporal concerns.

There was not far off from the city (of Edeffa) in the neighbourhood of which the Saint had his cell, a large country town; inhabited by pagans, obstinately addicted to their idol-worship, and heathenish superstitions; and withal barbarous and cruel, to a great degree, to all such, as sought to reclaim them from their idolatry, by preaching to them the faith of Christ. Insomuch that several of the clergy, and religious of that neighbourhood, who from time to time had attempted to bring them over to Christianity; instead of succeeding in their undertaking, had met with nothing but insults and outrages; and had been forced by their barbarity to abandon their enterprize. The bishop hearing of the heroick virtues of Abraham, cast his eye upon him, as one whose charity, zeal, meekness and patience, seemed most likely to prevail over the blindness, and obstinacy of these infidels: and therefore assembling his clergy, he proposed to them the advancing of the man of God, to the priestly dignity; to the end he might go, and convert that people. They all applauded his proposition; and went in a body, with the prelate at their head, to the cell of the holy man. The bishop told him upon what occasion they were come; and how great and good a work it would be in him, to go and to labour to procure the salvation of so many poor deluded souls. Abraham being surprized, and struck sad at the hearing of this proposal, begged of the prelate, that he would not

think of sending such a miserable wretch as him, upon so important and arduous an enterprize : but that he would suffer him to continue there in his cell; to lament, and to dopenance for his manifold sins. The bishop encouraged him, assuring him that God would assist him in this great work : that his having forsaken all things else for the love of God, was not enough to make his sacrifice compleat; unless he were also ready to renounce his own will, by the virtue of obedience; which is the true way to find out the will of God : that whilst he was staying in his cell, he was labouring only for his own salvation; but by going where he was about to send him, and labouring in the conversion of those infidels, the grace of God cooperating with him, he would save the souls of many; and be entitled himself to a so much the greater reward in eternal bliss. The man of God hearing all this, would not resist any longer : but cried out with tears : ‘ The Lord’s will be done ! I ‘ am ready to go, by obedience, to whatsoever place, ‘ you shall be pleased to send me.’ Thus the bishop brought him out of his cell ; and having ordained him priest, sent him away to preach to that pagan people.

He began his mission, by prayers and tears, poured out before God, in behalf of these poor souls; in whom he found no manner of disposition, to profit by his words. Then sending to his friend, whom he had charged with the disposing of all his worldly substance, left him by his parents, he procured from him a sum of money, with which he built, in a very short time, a church, and adorned it for divine service. In the mean while the people (for whom he was continually sighing and praying) made no opposition, although their curiosity brought them daily to see the building. But when, after he had finished the church, and dedicated it to the living God; with a most fervent prayer, accompanied with
many

many tears for the conversion of the idolaters ; his zeal carried him from the church, to the temple of the idols, where he overthrew their altars, and broke their statues in pieces ; they kept no longer any measures with him : but falling upon him with merciless fury, after having discharged innumerable blows and stripes upon him, they drove him out of their town.

The next morning, when they came to the church (as they daily did, not out of devotion, but out of a certain curiosity, and a pleasure they took in seeing the decorations of it) they were surprized beyond measure to find him there at his prayers. But upon his beginning to preach to them, and to conjure them, to turn from their idols to the living God ; they fell upon him again, and beat him worse than before : then fastening a rope about his feet, they dragged him out of the town, and there they pelted him with stones, till they thought they had made an end of him. About midnight, he, whom they had left for dead, came to himself ; and after making a fervent prayer, with abundance of tears, to the Father of mercies, for the conversion and salvation of his persecutors, he got up, and returned again into the town ; and early in the morning was found in the church singing psalms. The pagans were strangely astonished at the sight of him ; yet no way mollified ; but rather more enraged : so that they repeated again the treatment they had given him the day before, and dragged him again by the feet with ropes, out of their town. He returned nevertheless the next day : and thus for the space of three whole years, he still continued constant in his labours, and in his prayers, for their conversion ; under a perpetual succession of grievous sufferings, and pains, mockeries and outrages : without ever shewing the least anger or impatience, or giving them one single bad word, or even entertaining in his soul any hatred, or aversion to them. On the contrary the more
cruelly

cruelly they treated him, the more tenderly he loved them, and the more affectionately he invited them to come to Christ, *the way, the truth, and the life.*

When three years had passed in this manner, the patience and prayers of the Saint, prevailed at length over this obstinate resistance, which he had hitherto met with from this people. The inhabitants of the place, upon some occasion, were all assembled together; and began to declare to one another the great admiration they were in, at the unwearied patience, and charity of the servant of God: and to argue from thence that the God, whom he preached to them, must needs be the true God; and the religion, which taught him all this patience and charity, the true religion. The more, because as they reasoned with one another, they had seen how he, being but one man, had cast down, and broken in pieces all their gods, without their being able to resist him, or to revenge themselves of him. These reflections, the grace of God opening their eyes, and softening their hearts, produced upon the spot a general resolution, of going all of them in a body to the church, to yield themselves up to the man of God; and to embrace the faith he preached: which resolution they presently put in execution. The Saint received them with inexpressible joy: and having first instructed them in all the necessary articles of the Christian doctrine; he baptized them all, to the number of about one thousand persons; men, women and children. After which he continued for the space of one year, watering these young plants, till he saw them, not only strongly rooted in the Christian faith, but also diligent in bringing forth the fruit of all Christian virtues, some thirty fold, some sixty, some a hundred.

After this, having now accomplished the great work for which he was sent; and finding that the affection of this people for him was so great, that they

they would never willingly suffer him to return to his solitude : he withdrew himself from them privately by night, when they suspected nothing of it : recommending them first, in the most earnest manner he could, to the divine goodness ; and making three times the sign of the cross over their town. 'Tis not to be imagined, what desolation these good people were in, when coming to church the next morning they could not find their pastor : and what diligences both they, and the bishop (who was sensibly touched with their affliction) made use of, in searching after him : but all in vain ; he had hid himself so well, that they could hear no tidings of him. So that the good prelate, to comfort, and assist them, went himself amongst them ; and after having greatly edified them with his preaching ; ordained for them priests, deacons and lectors, for the ministry of the word, and the divine sacraments ; and for the care of their infant church. Which when Abraham had understood, he gave great thanks to God ; and then ventured to return to his ancient cell : to which his sheep often resorted, in order to hear from him the words of life.

We pass over other particulars of the virtues of this man of God ; and the frequent assaults he underwent from the malice of the common enemy : who oftentimes visibly appeared to him ; but was always vanquished by his humility, and by the confidence he had in our Lord ; so that he was not able so much as to give him any fear. But there is one most remarkable passage of the life of this servant of God, which must not be omitted ; which relates to the fall, the conversion and penance of his niece.

After the Saint had gone back to his cell, it happened that his brother, dying in the world, left an only daughter, named Mary, an orphan of seven years of age. This child was brought to her uncle, in his wilderness : who undertook to train her up to
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a religious life : and placed her, for this purpose, in a cell, adjoining to his own, with a little window between the two, through which he instructed her. Here she made such good use of the lessons, she daily received from him ; as to become a perfect model of piety, devotion, and penance : and continued in this happy and holy way for twenty years. But at the end of this time, a false religious, or rather a wolf in sheeps clothing, under pretence of coming, to be edified by the conversation of her uncle, found means to speak to her, and to tempt her to sin : and ceased not, till she was so unhappy, as to quit her cell, and yield to the temptation. The horror and remorse, that followed the crime, was so great, that it threw her into despair : so that instead of returning to her uncle, to confess her sin, in order to rise again after her fall, and to do penance ; she was resolved to flee away from him : and accordingly went to a distant town, and there abandoned herself to a sinful life.

The Saint having taken notice, that for the space of two days, he had not heard her sing psalms, as she was accustomed to do ; called to her to know the meaning of it : and as no answer was returned ; he presently understood that she was the dove, which he had seen in a vision swallowed up by a dragon. His grief for the loss of his dear child was inexpressible : he wept and prayed for her, without ceasing ; till at the end of two years, having heard of the place where she was, and of the wicked course of life, to which she had abandoned herself ; he took a resolution, to go after the lost sheep, in order to bring her back to Christ's fold. To effect this, he procured by the means of a friend, a horse, together with a soldiers habit, and a large cap or hat, which covered a good part of his face ; and taking some money with him, went to the place where she lived, which was an inn : where he ordered a great supper
to

to be prepared; told the host, that he had heard much of the beauty of a young woman in his house, whose name was Mary, and desired she might sup with him. After supper, when they were left alone, he took off his cap, and mingling tears with his words: ‘ My daughter, said he (for so he used to call her) dont you know me? My child did not I bring you up? What has befallen you? Who is the murtherer, that has killed your soul? Where is that angelical habit, that you formerly wore? Where is that admirable purity? Where are those tears, which you poured out in the presence of God? Where those watchings, employed in singing the divine praises? Where that holy austerity, that made you take pleasure in lying on the bare ground? Why did you not, after your first fall, come presently to acquaint me with it; since I should certainly have done penance for you, with my friend Ephrem (the writer of this life) who has been ever since under an unspeakable affliction on your account? Why had you so little confidence in me? Alas! who is there without sin, but God alone?’

In hearing these words, she stood as one struck dumb, with confusion and horror: and it was not without much difficulty, and many moving speeches, in which he, strongly represented to her the tender mercies of God, to repenting sinners; and even promised to take all her sins upon himself; that she at length was determined to return with him to her cell. Then prostrating herself at his feet, she spent the remainder of the night in prayers and tears. At break of day, he bid her get upon his horse; and so he conducted her back to his cell: ordering her to leave behind her, what money and goods she had there; as holding them of the devil, whom she had been serving. After her return, she gave herself up, with so much ardour, to the exercices of a penitential life; and bewailed her sins, day and night, with so deep

deep a sense of sorrow and contrition for them, joined with a lively confidence in the divine mercy, that God was pleased, within three years, to give her, as a token of his acceptance of her penitence, the grace of even working miracles, by restoring health to the diseased, by her prayers. However she continued her penitential course, with an incredible austerity, for all the fifteen years, that she lived after her conversion, and never ceased to lament her sins, till God was pleased to take her to himself. At the hour of her death, a certain brightness was observed on her countenance, by all that were present; which gave occasion to them all to glorify God.

As to St. Abraham, he passed to a better life, five years before her; after having spent fifty years, in serving God, with that admirable sanctity, we have seen. As soon as it was known that he was dead, the whole city, in a manner, assembled about his cell: and as many as could procure for themselves any part of his cloaths, carried them home with them, as precious relicks, which would bring a blessing along with them to their houses: and we are assured by St. Ephrem, that the touch of them cured all diseases upon the spot. St. Abraham is commemorated in the Roman martyrology, on the 16th of *March*: but the Greeks celebrate his festival, jointly with St. Mary his niece on the 29th of *October*.

Theodoret; in his Philotheus, gives us the life of another St. Abraham, a native of the city of Cyrus: who, from an anachoretical life, was called forth by divine inspiration, to the conversion of the inhabitants of a certain town on mount Libanus: which having happily effected, by his zeal and charity; after three years stay amongst them, he returned to his solitude. Where the faintly life he led, and the general esteem all men had of his virtues, and of his great talents, for the winning of souls to God, determined

mined superiors to send him, with the episcopal character, to the city of Carræ (or Haran) in Mesopotamia : which as yet had not received the faith of Christ, but was given up to the worship of devils. And God gave that blessing to the labours and preaching of his servant, backed by his continual prayer, and the wonderful sanctity and austerity of his life ; that this people also, by his means, was brought over to Christ. He flourished in the fourth century.



S T. J O H N of Egypt.

From Rufinus's lives of the fathers, chap. 1. Palladius, historia Lausiaca, chap. 43, and Cassian. L. 4. Institut. chap. 23, 24, 25.

AMONGST all the Saints of the Egyptian deserts, there is none, except St. Antony, whose name is so illustrious in church-history, and in the writings of the holy fathers, as that of St. John of Lycopolis (so called from the place, near which he dwelt in the hither Thebais) who in his days, was not only greatly renowned, for his extraordinary sanctity and miracles; but consulted also as an oracle, from all parts far and near, for his eminent spirit of prophecy; and that not only by persons of an inferior rank, but even by the great Theodosius the emperour himself: to whom amongst other things he foretold his glorious victories over the mighty armies of the two usurpers, Maximus, and Eugenius. This Saint was born about the year 305; and was brought up at first to the carpenter's trade. But when grown up he withdrew himself wholly from the world, and put himself under an ancient religious man; to whom he rendered all kind of service, with so much diligence and humility, that the good old father was quite in admiration at his virtue. However to make a trial of him, whether his virtue was built upon a solid foundation, or no; he often enjoined him things seemingly absurd, and withal very difficult, or even altogether impossible: all which the humble disciple immediately took in hand, and endeavoured to accomplish, with a wonderful faith, simplicity and perseverance; without so much as once allowing himself a thought of the unreasonableness, or impossibility of the injunction: but believing all things possible to obedience; and looking upon the ordinance

ordinance of his superior, as the commandment of God himself. Cassian relates to this purpose, how the old father, one day, fixing a dry stick of wood into the ground, bid his disciple water that tree twice every day: which he, with his usual punctuality in matter of obedience, constantly performed, for the space of a whole twelvemonth; whether he was sick or well; or whatsoever other occupation required his attention: though he was obliged to go two miles at each time, to fetch the water: till at the end of the year, the old father asked him, if the tree had taken root as yet, or no? And he simply answering, that he did not know: the father pulled the stick out of the ground, and bid him water it no longer.

After the death of his master, he employed about five years, in different monasteries, in the exercises of a religious life: and then being about forty years of age, he retired all alone to a steep mountain, about two miles distant from the city of Lycopolis; and there he chose for the place of his abode, a hollow rock of difficult access; in which, he made three rooms, or partitions, one of which served him for his oratory, where he prayed, another for his work-room, and the third for divers other uses. The entry of this cavern he stopped up in such a manner, that for the fifty years he lived there, he neither went out himself at any time, nor did any one ever come in within his enclosure: he only conversed, through a window, on certain days, with such as came to be edified by his heavenly discourses; or to seek counsel, or comfort, or the remedy of their diseases from him. For the lodging and entertaining of such as came to him from remote places, he permitted a dwelling to be built near to his grotto: where some servants of God, who had put themselves under his conduct, took care of these strangers. But as for women, none were suffered, upon any

account whatsoever, to come near him. For five days of the seven, his whole conversation was with God: on saturdays, and sundays, he let himself be seen, thro' his window, by such as came to visit him: and after having prayed with them, he entertained them with excellent lessons out of the word of God, according to the exigences of their souls; he resolved their doubts, comforted them in their afflictions and pains of spirit, and encouraged them to fervour, and to perseverance, in the love and service of God. His words were full of a heavenly wisdom, which he acquired by his continual conversation with God: for the more he withdrew himself from the things of the earth, the more the Spirit of God approached to him, with his heavenly light: so that he not only was endowed with a clear understanding of things present, but also with so perfect a knowledge, and foresight of things to come, that few or none of the Saints, since the Apostles, have been found to have excelled, or even to have equalled him, in this spirit of prophecy. He often declared to those that came to visit him, the most secret thoughts of their hearts; and gave them wholesome corrections in private, for their sins, which he could not know but by revelation: he often foretold publick calamities; and warned the people against the sins, by which they were about to draw down such judgments from God upon their heads: and on many other important occasions, relating to the publick welfare, he both gave directions, to them that were in power, what they were to do, and punctually foretold the success. He was also illustrious for innumerable miracles: though to avoid ostentation, he was not willing that the diseased should be brought to his cell, to be cured; but rather chose to send them some oil, which he had blessed; which never failed to heal them, of all their diseases.

Palladius relates, how he himself took a journey of eighteen days, from mount Nitria, to the neighbourhood of Lycopolis, on purpose to visit this Saint: and that he told him, as soon as he saw him, from what monastery he was come: that a little after, the governor of the province coming in, and the Saint having entertained him for some time in private upon the affairs of his soul; when the governor was gone, he let Palladius know, what had passed in the mean time in his thoughts. He told him also what temptations he lay under, of quitting his solitude, and of returning into his own country, under the specious pretexts of comforting his aged father, and of inducing his brother and his sister to embrace a religious life: assuring him that this was needless, for that they had both of them already renounced the world; and that his father would live seven years longer. He added that he (Palladius) should come one day to be a bishop; and should afterwards meet with great troubles and afflictions. All which came to pass, when Palladius, after some time, going into Palestine for change of air, and from thence into Bithynia, was there made bishop of Helenopolis; and had no small share in the persecution raised against St. John Chrysostome, being himself also expelled from his sea on that occasion.

Rufinus also with six others, his companions, went in like manner from Jerusalem to visit this great Saint, not long before his happy death. At their first coming, when according to custom, they were about to join with him in prayer, and then to receive his benediction: he asked, if there were not some one amongst them, that was in holy orders? They answered, no. But he looked on them one by one, and then pointing to the youngest of the company, he said this man is a deacon. And so indeed he was, though he desired to conceal it, and only one of the company knew of it. He therefore continued to deny

it: upon which the Saint took hold of his hand, and kissed it, saying: 'My son, take care not to disown the grace you have received, from God; lest that which is good should be an occasion, of your falling into that which is evil, by telling a lye, for the sake of humility. An untruth must never be told, not even under the pretext of good; nor upon any account whatsoever: for no lye can proceed from God, but always comes from evil, as our Saviour himself teaches us.' The deacon received this charitable correction with a respectful silence. After which, they all joined together in prayer: and as soon as they had finished, one of the company, who was grievously tormented with a tertian ague, humbly entreated the Saint to cure him. He told him, that he desired to be delivered from that, which was sent him for his greater good: for that sicknesses, and other such like chastisements greatly serve to purify the soul. However he blessed some oil, and gave it him: with which he was suddenly, and perfectly healed. The man of God gave orders, says Rufinus, for our entertainment, according to the strictest rules of humanity and hospitality: taking much care for us, whilst he took none at all for himself. For he never eat till after evensong; and then but in a very small quantity; and never any thing which had come near the fire. This was his perpetual fast; which he still observed, tho' he was now ninety years of age.

After they had refreshed their bodies, by the entertainment, the Saint had ordered for them; they returned again to him, to receive from him the food of their souls. He asked them, from what place they came, and what was the motive of their journey? They answered, that they came from Jerusalem; with a desire to be edified, by seeing with their own eyes what they had heard so much of. Upon this he told them, with a chearful serenity of countenance,

tenance, which proceeded from the inward joy and peace of his heart; that he wondered they should take so much pains, and should suffer the fatigues of so long a journey, merely to see him, a poor frail imperfect mortal; in whom there was nothing worthy of any man's seeking after, or admiring: for even supposing they had conceived an opinion that they might be edified, by what they should see in him, or hear from his mouth; yet how inconsiderable would all this be, in comparison with what they might learn any day, without going abroad for it, from the prophets and apostles, or rather from the Spirit of God in the holy Scriptures. However, seeing they were come so far, through a desire to hear something from him; he began, to make them a most divine exhortation, set down at large by Rufinus: in which after warning them against the danger, of taking occasion of vain-glory, from this their journey, or from any thing they should see or hear from any of the servants of God; either by thinking better of themselves on this account, or by seeking to be thought better of by others, for having seen or heard these things: he proceeds to declare to them, how pernicious an evil pride and vain-glory is; which not only robs us of all the fruit, and of the reward of all our good works; but is capable of even casting headlong the soul, that seems to herself to be already got up to the top of the hill of religious perfection, in an instant down the precipice, that leads to the bottomless pit; as it did Satan and his angels. Of this he gives them a dreadful example, which had happened lately in that very desert, of a solitary, who dwelt there in a cavern by himself, and led a very austere life, labouring with his own hands for his living, and passing both days and nights in prayer; who after having attained to an eminent degree of virtue; suffering himself to be puffed up with pride and vanity, and a conceit

ceit of his own strength, fell an easy prey to the enemy; who assuming the shape of a woman in distress, and being admitted by him into his cave, excited in his heart impure thoughts and criminal desires: to which when he had consented, and was seeking to put them in execution; the phantom vanished away, with a most hideous noise; but a multitude of devils was heard in the place, with a lowd laughter, mocking and insulting over him. The wretch was so cast down, and confounded at this shamefull fall, that giving up all thoughts of labouring to rise again, and to repair, by penance and humility, the fault into which his pride had betrayed him, he fell into the deep gulph of despair: and returning into the world, he gave himself up to all manner of impurities: industriously avoiding the meeting or conversing with any holy persons, who by their wholesome admonitions might seek to reclaim and convert him.

In the sequel of his discourse, the Saint inculcates the necessity of keeping also a strict guard upon our heart, and our thoughts; in order to hinder any passion, or disorderly affection of the will, or any vain desire, of any thing, which is not according to God, from taking root in the heart: for from these roots presently spring up a thousand distractions, to the great prejudice of our attention and devotion in prayer, and of the purity of the soul. So that it is not enough, says he, ‘ to have renounced in words, ‘ the world, and all the works of Satan the prince of ‘ the world; nor even to have left our goods, our ‘ lands and all we possessed in the world: We must ‘ also renounce our own imperfections, and all vain ‘ pleasures, and *unprofitable and hurtful desires*, which ‘ as the apostle tells us, 1 Tim. vi. 9. *drown men in destruction and perdition*. For without renouncing ‘ these things, we never renounce in effect the devil ‘ and all his works: since ’tis by the means of these ‘ the devil enters into our heart, and takes possession ‘ of

' of it. These disorderly affections hold a corespon-
 ' dence with this mortal enemy : they proceed from
 ' him, and they open the door of the soul to him.
 ' So that 'tis no wonder that such souls as these, are
 ' never at rest, but always in trouble and commo-
 ' tion ; since they always carry about with them so
 ' wretched a guest, to whom they have given ad-
 ' mittance, by their passions and vices. On the
 ' other hand, he that has renounced the world *indeed* ;
 ' that is to say, who has retrenched all his vices and
 ' passions, and banished far from his soul all disor-
 ' derly affections to sin ; so as to leave no gate open,
 ' by which the devil may enter into him : he who
 ' represses his anger, who resists and overcomes all
 ' irregular motions to evil, who avoids all lying,
 ' who abhors envy, who not only speaks no evil of
 ' any man, but does not even allow himself the li-
 ' berty of thinking any evil of any one ; and who
 ' always considers the goods and evils of his neigh-
 ' bour as his own ; and behaves accordingly on every
 ' occasion : such a one as this opens the gate of his
 ' soul to the Holy Spirit ; who comes in, and fills it
 ' with his light, and with those admirable fruits of
 ' *charity, joy, peace, patience, &c.* which are produced
 ' in the soul by this heavenly Comforter.' Where-
 fore the Saint proceeds to recommend, in a particu-
 lar manner, to all that desire to be religious indeed,
 to labour, to acquire that perfect purity, both of con-
 science and of heart, which may enable them to offer
 up to our Lord perfect and pure prayer ; and such
 as may introduce them to a certain familiarity with
 his divine Majesty, and with his holy Angels ; and to
 such a happy union of love ; as that they may say
 with St. Paul Rom. viii 38, 39. *That neither death,*
nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor
things present, nor things to come---nor any other crea-
ture shall be able to separate them from the love of God,
which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And he further

adds, that the great means to attain to this perfect purity, which is so pleasing to God, is the retrenching, by the virtue of mortification, all sorts of vanities, inordinate affections, and sensual delights, even in little things; and walking resolutely in the narrow way of self-denial and penance: with which, if we shall join the love of solitude, of silence and recollection of spirit, we shall easily arrive at all perfection; and even begin to enjoy a kind of heaven upon earth.

With these and such like heavenly discourses the Saint entertained his guests: and after three days sent them away, giving them his blessing, and telling them at parting; that on that very day the news was brought to Alexandria, of the victory which the emperor Theodosius had obtained over the tyrant Eugenius. But, said he, that good emperor shall not long survive this victory, but shall die a natural death. All which they soon after found to be true. The man of God himself did not out-live that year. For the space of three days before his death, he let no man see him; and on the fourth day, being on his knees in prayer, he breathed out his pure soul into the hands of his Creator; whom she went to enjoy for a happy eternity.

Palladius relates of him, as having learnt it from his own mouth; that for all those years he had lived in that cavern, he had never seen any one woman; he had never seen any one piece of money; he had never seen any man eating, nor had any man ever seen him either eat or drink.

But we must not here omit a very remarkable history, relating to this Saint, which is not only attested by Rufinus and Palladius, but also by St. Augustine (*L. de curâ pro mortuis*, C. 17.) as what he had learnt from those, who had been informed by the very parties themselves, to whom it happened. A certain tribune or colonel came to the Saint to beg of him
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to allow his wife to see him : for she had taken a long and dangerous journey, out of the extream desire she had of visiting him, and seeing him. The man of God answered, that he never saw, nor admitted of visits from any women. But as the colonel still pressed him, affirming that it would cost his wife her life, through the greatness of her affliction, if she were not admitted to see him ; the Saint bid him go, and assure his wife, she should see him that very night, without giving herself the trouble of either coming to him, or so much as going out of her own bedchamber. Accordingly that night, the man of God appeared to her in a vision in her sleep, and said to her : ‘ O woman, great is thy faith, which
 ‘ has obliged me to come hither, to satisfy thy request. However I must warn thee, not to desire
 ‘ any more to see the mortal and earthly visage of
 ‘ the servants of God, but rather to contemplate, with
 ‘ the eyes of the spirit, their lives and other actions :
 ‘ *for the flesh profiteth nothing ; but ’tis the spirit that*
 ‘ *giveth life.* Know this also, that I, not in quality of
 ‘ a Saint, or of a prophet, as thou imaginest, but
 ‘ only in consideration of your faith, have prayed
 ‘ to our Lord for you : and he has been pleased to
 ‘ grant to thee the cure of all the corporal diseases,
 ‘ which thou labourest under : and henceforward
 ‘ both thou and thy husband shall enjoy good health ;
 ‘ and all your house shall be blessed. But take care,
 ‘ you never forget these benefits of God ; and that
 ‘ you live always in the fear of the Lord, and require no more for your worldly livelihood, than
 ‘ the appointments due to your poste. Content thyself then with having seen me in thy sleep, and desire no more.’ When the woman awaked, she related to her husband the whole vision, together with the habit of the Saint, and all the lineaments of his face ; which, to his great astonishment, all perfectly agreed. Upon which he returned, on the next day, to
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the man of God, to give him thanks: who presently, as soon as he saw him, told him: 'behold I have fulfilled what I promised, depart then in peace, and may the blessing of God go along with you both.'

St. John of Egypt is celebrated in the Roman Martyrology on the seventeenth of March.



S T. A R S E N I U S.

From the third and fifth book of the remarkable actions and sayings of the ancient fathers, published by Rosweidus.

ST. Arsenius was a nobleman, in great favour with the emperor Theodosius, who committed to him the care of the education of his two sons Arcadius and Honorius, in quality both of their godfather, and their governor. In this eminent station, he lived at court, the life of a courtier, in the midst of honours, riches and pleasures, till he was about forty years of age : when God was pleased to call him, from this worldly life, into the wilderness ; there to seek, by flight, silence and repose, the salvation of his soul. For when he was one day at his prayers, earnestly begging of our Lord to teach him, what he was to do to secure his eternal salvation : he heard a voice, that answered him, ‘ Arsenius, flee the company of men, and thou shalt be saved.’ Wherefore, in compliance with this heavenly call, he abandoned at once all his secular glory, for the love of Christ ; and quitting all that he seemed to possess in the world, retired into the desert of Scete, in order to dedicate there the remainder of his days to the love and service of his Maker, in solitude and prayer, labour and penance. Here again, when he was repeating the same prayer, he heard the like voice again, saying to him : ‘ Arsenius, flee, be silent, and be quiet (*fuge, tace, quiesce*) these are the principles of salvation, or the first things to be done in order to salvation. *Hæc sunt principia salutis.*’

To fulfil this repeated injunction of fleeing, from the company of men, he chose to have his cell at a great distance from the other solitaries ; and very rarely

rarely admitted of any visits from them. Even when he went to church (which was thirteen leagues off his habitation) he used to place himself behind one of the pillars, in order to be as much as possible out of sight, so as neither to see, nor to be seen. Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria, went one day to visit him, with some others in his company; and desired of him, to make some discourse to the company, for their spiritual edification. The Saint asked them, whether they were all disposed to observe, and to put in practice what he should say to them? Yes, very willingly, said they. Why then, said he, I beg of you, that in what place soever you hear of Arsenius, you will be pleased to let him be alone, and never to come near him. Another time same the patriarch, having a desire to visit him, sent to know, if he would admit of his visit. Arsenius answered, that if he came alone, he should open his door to him: but if he brought any others with him, he would seek out another place, and would stay there no longer: so that Theophilus, for fear of driving him away, refrained from visiting him. The abbot Mark, asked him one day, why he kept at this distance from men, and shunned the conversation of all the other solitaries? He answered: 'God knows how dearly I love them all. But I cannot be at the same time both with him, and with them. For whereas the Angels, tho' their number be almost infinite, yet have all but one will; 'tis quite otherwise with men, whose dispositions and wills are very different. Therefore I cannot think of leaving God, to converse with men.'

As to the spending of his time in this solitude, it was divided between working and prayer: or rather his whole life in the wilderness was one continual prayer: for even when he was sitting at his work, and making baskets, which was his daily employment, his soul was ever attentive to God in prayer,

prayer, and forever bewailing his sins; infomuch that he was obliged to have always a handkerchief in his bosom, by reason of the floods of penitential tears, which flowed continually from his eyes. As for the nights, he generally spent them, as we learn from his disciple Daniel, in watching and prayer: only towards the morning, when nature could hold out no longer, he used to suffer sleep, which he called his *naughty servant*, to close his eyes: but after a very short repose, which he took sitting, he rose up again to his accustomed exercises. The same disciple related, that on saturday evenings, the sitting sun usually left him at his prayers, with his hands extended towards heaven; and that he continued praying in this same posture, till the sun rising the next morning, came beating upon his eyes. In order to renew his fervour in his spiritual exercises, he would be often saying to himself: *Arsenius, Arsenius, to what end didst thou leave the world, and come hither?* He used also often to say, that whenever he had been talking, he had always found matter to repent of, but had never regretted his having kept silence. He was also a great lover of holy poverty. The other solitaires said of him: that as no one was more richly clad than Arsenius, whilst he lived at court; so none of the inhabitants of the desert, was more meanly and poorly clad than he was, after his retiring from the world. His poverty was so great, that in a certain sickness of his, having occasion for a trifle of money, to procure some little necessaries, he was obliged to receive it in alms: upon which he cried out: ‘I give thee thanks, O my God, that thou hast made me worthy to be thus reduced to the necessity of asking an alms in thy name.’ After he had lived for many years in the wilderness, a kinsman of his, a senator, dying, left him by his last will, a considerable estate. This will was brought to the Saint, by a proper officer, in his solitude: which

which displeased him so much, that he would have torn it in pieces, had not the officer flung himself at his feet, declaring that it would cost him his life, if the will were destroyed. Upon this Arsenius gave back the will, saying. ‘ How is it possible this man should make me his heir by his will, since he, as it appears, died but a little while ago, and I have been dead so many years ? ’

As to the method of his fastings, and his austerities in this kind ; it was hard to know them in particular, by reason of his keeping himself so much to himself. Only his disciple Daniel said, that for all the time he knew him, they laid him in, but a very slender provision, for his whole year’s sustenance ; and yet that he managed this so well, as not only to make it suffice for himself, but also to impart some of it to his disciples, whenever they came to see him. The same disciple also took notice, that when he was sitting at his work, making baskets, according to his custom, of the leaves of palm-trees ; and the water, in which he was obliged to moisten, and soften these leaves, began to corrupt, he would never change it, or fling it away ; but if there were any need of fresh water, he would pour it in upon that which was already corrupted ; that so it might always continue to yield a disagreeable smell. The brethren asked him one day, why he would not suffer that corrupt water to be flung away, since it infected his whole cell with its stench ? ‘ O, said he, I was used when I lived in the world, to gratify myself with the most agreeable perfumes : and therefore ’tis no more than just, that I should now, for all the time that remains of my life, in punishment of my former sensuality, support this stench ; in hopes that at the last day, God will deliver me from the insupportable stench of hell ; and not condemn my soul with that of the rich man, who had passed his days in feasting and delights.’

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But nothing was more remarkable in this Saint, than his extraordinary humility, which made him so industrious in keeping himself out of sight, and in concealing every thing, that might procure him the applause or esteem of men. He was learned in the human sciences, before he quitted the world, and was a perfect master, both of the Greek and Latin: and after his retiring into the wilderness, he received great lights from God, for understanding matters of the spirit; so that no one was more knowing than he in the holy scriptures; or could explain better the most difficult passages of them: yet he would never speak of these matters, at least by his own choice; nor shew at any time his knowledge of them; but rather chose to consult, and to hearken to the most illiterate of the brethren, provided he were truly humble. Being asked one day, why he, being so learned a man, sought instruction and counsel from a certain solitary, who was quite destitute of all human literature. He replied: ' 'Tis true, whilst I ' was in the world, I acquired some knowledge in ' the sciences of the world (and in the Greek and ' Latin tongue) but since I have left the world; I ' have not yet been able to learn even the A, B, C, ' of the true science of the Saints, of which this ' ignorant rustick is master: ' such were his humble sentiments of himself.

After he had spent forty years in the desert of Scete, the Mazices, a barbarous people of Libya, made an irruption on that side: where they massacred St. Moses, and other solitaries, and forced all the rest from their cells. Upon this occasion, Arsenius was obliged to change his earthly residence, but not the true dwelling place, where his heart was fixed. He went therefore to a place called Trohe, not far from the ancient Babylon of Egypt (now Cairo) and there he continued his usual course of life for ten years: till fresh irruptions of the barbarians drove him

him thence. From Trohe, he went to Canopus, in the lower Egypt, which is not far distant from Alexandria: where being too much disturbed, with the importunity of visits from that great metropolis, he would stay no longer than three years; and then returned again to Trohe; where he spent the two last years of his mortal pilgrimage. When his end approached, he told his disciples, that he desired they should bury him privately, no matter how, only taking care that he should be remembered in the offering of the holy sacrifice. They that were present at his death, seeing him, said to him: 'Father, why do you weep? Are you also like the rest afraid to die? Yes, said he, very much: and this is no new fear, but a fear that has stuck close to me ever since I first came into the desert.' He departed to our Lord in a good old age, being ninety five years old: of which he had spent fifty five in the desert, in the exercises of a religious life. St. Pemen seeing him expire, cried out: 'O happy Arsenius, for having wept, and mourned for yourself so much in this world! For they that do not mourn in this life, shall mourn for all eternity in the next.' It is also recorded of the patriarch Theophilus, that when he was at the point of death, he said, 'O how happy were you, O Arsenius, who had this last hour continually before your eyes!'

The name of St. Arsenius, is recorded in the Roman martyrology on the nineteenth of July.

S T. N I L A M M O N.

From Sozomenus an ancient church historian, L. 8. C. 19.

NILAMMON was a holy anchoret, who had made himself a little cell, near Geres, a small city of Egypt, in the neighbourhood of Pelusium; and lived there for many years in admirable sanctity. When the bishop of that city died, the clergy and people, who had conceived a high opinion of the eminent virtues of this servant of God, desired to have him to succeed in the bishop's see. But whatsoever instances they made, Nilammon's humility still stood off; and he still refused to submit his shoulders to a charge, which even an Angel might have reason to fear. And as he apprehended, lest they should use violence, he stopt up the door of his cell, and fenced it with stones; that they might not be able to come at him.

Whilst these things were doing, it happened that Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria, coming by sea from Constantinople (where he had been too much engaged in the unjust deposing of St. John Chrysostome) was driven by a storm upon the coast of Geres. The people therefore took this opportunity of the presence of the patriarch, to entreat him to oblige Nilammon, to accept of the bishoprick. Whereupon Theophilus going to his cell, used his best endeavours to prevail upon him to accept of episcopal consecration; and continued to press him so close, that Nilammon finding the patriarch would not hear any thing that he could alledge to excuse himself, desired at least one day's respite, to set his affairs in order: telling him, that on the following day he might do with him as he pleased.

The patriarch failed not to come on the following day, and all the people with him: and then challeng-

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ging the promise of the Saint, he desired him to open his door, that they might proceed to his consecration. Nilammon proposed, that some time should be allowed him for prayer, before his consecration. Theophilus applauded the proposition, and betook himself also to prayer. Nilammon prayed with so much fervour, that he breathed out his soul in prayer into the hands of his Creator. In the mean time the patriarch, and the rest that were without, after having allowed him, as they thought, a competent time for his devotion, began to be impatient, and to call upon him to open his door : but finding that a good part of the day passed in this manner, and that no answer was returned to them ; they forced their way into his cell ; and to their great surprize found him dead. They buried him with great honour, and erected a church over his monument, where they celebrated his festival, amongst the Saints.

He died anno 403 : and his name is recorded on the sixth day of January in the Roman martyrology.



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S T. S I M E O N S T Y L I T E S.

From Theodoret in his Philotheus. chap. 26. and Antonius disciple of the Saint, in his life.

THOUGH there were during the life time of St. Simeon Stylites, almost as many eye witnesses of his extraordinary course of life, and of the innumerable prodigies which God wrought by him, as there were men in all the Eastern regions, not to say in the whole known world; yet the great Theodoret, having undertaken, whilst the Saint was yet alive, to transmit, by writing, to posterity a faithful account of this wonder of the world, was afraid, lest he should seem to succeeding ages, to have delivered to them a fable rather than a true history. But the divine providence, which raised up this Saint, in so extraordinary a manner, in order to shew forth to all the world the power of his grace; to rouse up by so great an example the drooping spirits of lukewarm Christians; and to enlighten the eyes, and touch the hearts of thousands of infidels and sinners: was pleased that this his wonderful life should not only be perfectly well known, at the time he lived, thro' the whole extent of the Roman empire, and all the Eastern nations, which bordered upon the empire; but for the edification of posterity should also be written, by such authors, and in so authentic a manner, that we may safely say there is no fact in history better attested.

This Saint was born towards the latter end of the fourth century, at a place called Sisan, upon the confines of Syria and Cilicia. In his tender years, he was employed by his parents, in feeding their sheep in the country; so that he seems to have had but little opportunity of frequenting the church, or hearing the word of God. But a great snow falling

one day, obliged him to leave the sheep under shelter at home; and gave him leisure to go to church. He entered therefore into the house of God, extremely touched, and quite penetrated with the fear of God: and he gave great attention to the divine lessons, which were there read, out of the epistles of St. Paul, and out of the gospel: particularly he took notice of those words of the sermon upon the mount; *blest are they that mourn: and wo be to you that laugh: and blessed are the clean of heart,* &c. and addressing himself to an old man, who was one of the congregation, he desired to be further informed, what he was to do, and what course of life to follow, that he might live up to these heavenly lessons, and save his soul? This good old man recommended to him a retired and solitary life, as most proper to establish his soul in solid virtue: and spoke so movingly, and effectually to him; that this holy seed sunk deep into his heart, and began to produce its fruit there. The first thing he did upon this was to retire to a solitary place, where there was a church of the Martyrs, and there to prostrate himself flat upon the ground, and with all the fervour of his soul to beg of him, who desires that all men should be saved, to vouchsafe to direct him in the way of perfect piety, in order to his eternal salvation. He continued a long time in prayer, till he fell a sleep, and in his sleep had the following vision. He seemed to himself (as he related to Theodoret) to be digging into the ground, in order to lay the foundation of a building; and that he heard a voice, which bid him dig still deeper. He did so, and then would have rested himself; but the voice a second time bid him go deeper still. And the same thing having been repeated four times, one after another, at length it was said to him, that it was deep enough, and that he had now nothing to do but to build.

Arising

Arising from the ground, he went strait to a neighbouring monastery, which was governed by a holy abbot, called Timothy. Here he prostrated himself before the gate, employing three whole days and nights in fasting and prayer, without being taken notice of. At length the abbot coming out, he cast himself at his feet, and begged of him, with many tears, to take pity of a poor soul, that was in danger of perishing, and that desired to learn to serve God. The abbot encouraged him, and taking him by the hand, led him into the monastery; and recommended to the brethren, to teach him the rule of the house which he quickly learnt, and practised with great perfection, (being then only thirteen years old) and even surpassed all the rest in humility, and in the exercises of fasting and penance. Here also, in four months, he learnt the whole psalter; and took great delight in meditating on, and feeding his soul with these heavenly hymns. In this monastery he remained two years, giving a perfect pattern of a consummate virtue and piety, in so tender an age. In the mean time his parents were seeking after him, and bewailing him as lost, whilst he with much more reason was rejoicing, as having now happily found both himself, and his God.

From this religious house, for greater improvement in the science of the Saints, he went to another monastery, founded at a place called Teleda, near Antioch, by the disciples of the Saints Ammian and Eusebius; and governed at this time by the abbot Heliodorus. And here he remained in all for about nine or ten years. There were in this monastery about eighty monks: but Simeon out did them all in the exercises of a religious life: and whereas all the rest were accustomed to eat once a day, or at least once in two days; he fasted the whole week; so as to eat nothing all the week, only one meal on the Lord's day. In this monastery it was, that

having procured a rope or cord, made of the leaves of palm trees, and so hard and rough, that it could scarce be even handled; he privately girt himself with it, under his habit, next to his skin, so close, that it made its way into the flesh, till it was almost covered, and the flesh itself was perfectly corrupted with it. He concealed what he suffered on this occasion, till the religious found out, how the case stood with him; and the abbot insisted upon his parting with the cord, which with much ado, and not without putting him to great tortures, was disengaged from the flesh.

After he was cured, the abbot dismissed him from the monastery; fearing lest any of the other religious might suffer prejudice, by aiming at an imitation of his extraordinary austerities. Simeon on this occasion, going into a more remote and lonesome part of the mountain, found there a dry well, into which he went down, and there sung the praises of God. Here he remained for several days, without either eating or drinking, till Heliodorus, repenting that he had sent the Saint away, in that manner, desired two of the brethren to seek after him, and to bring him back again. These by the direction of some shepherds (who had heard him singing) found him out in his well, and with the help of a rope brought him up, and conducted him back to the monastery. Where he continued for a short time: and then he took himself to an abandoned hut, near a village called Telanissus, situated at the foot of that mountain, on the top of which he afterwards finished his course.

In this hut, he lived shut up during three years: and here our Lord first inspired him with a desire of fasting all the forty days of lent, without taking any manner of corporal nourishment, during the whole time. Upon this, he desired Bassus, who was the ecclesiastical superior in that district, to wall up the door

door of his cell, for that lent; and so to leave him quite to himself, without any thing for his food. Bassus remonstrated to him, that this would be undertaking a thing, that was above the strength of man: and that to destroy himself (which would be the consequence of such a fast) would be no act of virtue; but on the contrary a grievous crime. Leave with me then, father, saith the Saint, ten loaves of bread, and a pitcher of water; that I may make use of them, in case I find it necessary. Bassus accordingly furnished the loaves and the water; and then stopping up the door, went his way; and did not return till the forty days were ended. When Easter was come, he made haste to visit the servant of God; carrying with him the blessed sacrament: but when he had removed the stones, and opened the door, he found the Saint lying extended on the floor, like one dead, without speech or motion; and the ten loaves, and the water quite untouched. However as he found there was life in him, he dipped a sponge in the water, and with it moistened his mouth: and then gave him the holy communion. With this heavenly food he was raised up again; and was further enabled to recover his strength, by taking in a little nourishment from the juice of herbs and pulse. This fast of forty days, during lent, without either eating or drinking any thing at all, from this time forward, he constantly observed every year, for the remainder of his life: which time and custom at length made easy to him. For in the first beginning, after passing the first part of lent, standing and praising God, he was obliged, as he grew weaker, to sit himself down, and in this posture to perform the divine office; till in the latter end, his weakness forced him to lye down at his length, stretched out as one half dead: and upon this account, in the first years of his living, and standing upon the pillar, he was constrained for the latter part of his forty days

fast, to support himself, by the help of a poste, fastened to his pillar, for this purpose; to which he caused himself to be tied, as he grew weaker. But for many years before his death, God had strengthened him so far, that he stood not in need of any of these helps: but passed the whole time of lent, with all the chearfulness imaginable, without any manner of nourishment, or human support.

From his hut, near Telanissus, the Saint went up to the top of the neighbouring mountain; and there made for himself an inclosure of stones, without any covering, in which he remained for some years: taking no other nourishment but boiled lentils, and water; and by the means of a chain, one end of which he fastened to his right leg, and the other to a great stone, confining himself to such narrow limits, that he could not go beyond the length of his chain. But if he was chained in body, his soul was at liberty, and was continually flying up towards her God, by mental prayer and contemplation. This chain, upon the remonstrances of Melecius, a chorepiscopus under the patriarch of Antioch, he suffered to be taken away. At which time, as Theodoret learnt from Melecius himself, after the smith had filed off the iron, when they came to take away the leather, which the Saint had put next to his skin, to hinder the chain from entring into his flesh, as the cord had done before; they found in it about twenty large puneezes or bugs: which this prelate thought worthy of particular notice, to shew the wonderful patience of the Saint, who had quietly suffered for so long a time, the troublesome bites of these insects, when he might with so much ease have rid himself of them, at once, by destroying them.

And now the reputation of Simeon's sanctity being spread far and near, great multitudes began to resort to him: and many were the miraculous graces,

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in all kinds, which were obtained by his prayers and blessing: insomuch that all men crowded about him; and fought to come near, and to touch his garments; believing that those coarse skins, with which he was clad, imparted a benediction. This was so troublesome, and so insupportable to the Saint, that upon this occasion he first conceived the thought of living upon a pillar, to be out of the reach of the crowd. Which was no doubt a particular inspiration of God, who designed by the means of this his extraordinary manner of living, to draw great numbers of infidels to the faith, and of Christians to a virtuous and penitential life.

He began this new way of life, never before attempted by any one, about the year of Christ 423, and continued it for about seven and thirty years, that is, till his death. The pillar, which he caused to be made at first, was but six cubits, that is three yards high: this he afterwards exchanged for one of twelve cubits; and then again after some time, for one of twenty two cubits: but that, on which he finished his course, was of the height of thirty six cubits; that is, of eighteen yards. Its diameter, as we learn from Evagrius, was at the most but of two cubits, or one yard: so that he could not, if he would, lye down upon it at his length. In the mean time, he had no covering, or shelter, to defend him, either from the rigour of the winter, or from the heats of the summer, or from the violence of the rain or wind, or other injuries of the air. His ordinary posture, was standing, night and day, without any other support but the strength of his faith, and the divine grace. In his prayer, he very frequently bowed himself down to adore his God; and that in such a manner, as to bring his forehead almost to his toes; his great fasts (in never eating but once a week, and then next to nothing) having reduced his body to that condition, which made this easy to him. These adorations he repeated so often

often; that as we learn from Theodoret, one day, when this holy prelate was himself present, one of his attendants counted of them to the number of 1244. He often remained for a good space of time, in his prayer, bowed down in this manner (with his forehead upon the pillar) and this 'tis likely might also be the posture, in which he slept: for certain it is, that he some-times slept, though fame had published, that he lived without either sleeping or eating. However, he certainly slept very little; and generally passed almost all the night in prayer: and so he did the best part of the day; even till the ninth hour; that is till about three in the afternoon, when he made his exhortations to the people. But on the eves, or vigils of the festivals, he not only passed the whole night in prayer; but stood all the time on his feet, with his hands stretched out, and extended towards heaven.

The other holy inhabitants of the oriental deserts, hearing of this new and extraordinary kind of life, which the Saint had undertaken; having consulted together, sent a deputation to him, as we learn from the historian Evagrius L. 1. chap 13, to ask him the meaning of his taking to this unheard of course of life, and leaving the common road, which had been beaten, by all the Saints, and the holy fathers, who were gone before him? and to order him immediately to come down from his pillar. Giving nevertheless instructions to their deputy, that if Simeon should shew himself ready to obey, he should let him alone, and encourage him to go on with his undertaking; as shewing by his ready obedience that what he did, was not by any caprice, but by divine inspiration: but that if he refused to obey, he should oblige him to come down by force. The deputy had no sooner delivered his commission; but the Saint, without making the least reply or demur, presently disposed himself to obey, and to come down.

down. Whereupon the deputy told him, to continue where he was : for his undertaking was from God.

This the Almighty himself sufficiently manifested, by the many miraculous gifts and graces he bestowed upon him: of which there were in his life time millions of witnesses. For an incredible multitude from all parts of the world, was continually coming to him, to see this wonder of the world, to hear his divine instructions, and to seek remedies through him for all their evils. ‘ For you shall not only see there, ‘ says Theodoret, the inhabitants of our province ‘ (Syria) but also the Ismaelites (the Saracens of Arabia) the Persians, the Armenians, the Iberians, ‘ the Ethiopians, and other nations, which are still ‘ more remote than these. There come also people ‘ to him from the furthest parts of the West: from ‘ Spain, from Britain, from Gaul (France) and ‘ other neighbouring provinces. And as to Italy, it ‘ is needless to say any thing; we are assured that his ‘ name is so illustrious in Rome, that they even set ‘ up little pictures of him in their shops and porches, ‘ for a protection and defence.’ So far Theodoret, writing, whilst the Saint was yet alive, the things of which he himself was witness. Who also gives several instances of the spirit of prophecy, which he had experienced in this Saint; and of great and evident miracles, wrought before his own eyes. He adds, that great numbers of infidels, by occasion of this Saint, were daily brought over to the faith of Christ. ‘ One may see, says he, the Iberians, Armenians and Persians, coming to receive baptism. ‘ And as to the Saracens, they come to him in ‘ large companies of two or three hundreds, or even ‘ of a thousand at a time; abjuring with a loud voice ‘ their false religion; treading their idols under ‘ their feet, in the presence of this bright light of ‘ Christianity, embracing the divine mysteries of our ‘ holy

‘ holy faith ; and receiving from the sacred mouth
‘ of this man of God, the rules of life, which they
‘ are to follow for the time to come. I myself have
‘ been witness of all this.’

As to the rest, the same learned godly prelate gives an ample testimony to the unparalleled modesty and humility of this great servant of God ; and to his wonderful meekness, and affability to persons of all conditions, how poor or mean soever they were, according to the world. But nothing was so admirable in him as that invincible patience, constancy, courage and alacrity, with which he underwent, for such a number of years, the voluntary austerities of so severe and rigid a course of penance : which for a great part of the time was rendered still more difficult and insupportable, by a dreadful ulcer in his left foot, which he had contracted by his continual standing, and which sent forth corrupted blood and vermin. And yet with all his fasting, his watching, his prayer, and his other austerities, he ceased not daily to labour, for the salvation of the souls of his neighbours, by delivering to them from his pillar, twice a day, excellent exhortations, to take off their hearts from this wretched earth ; to set always before their eyes that everlasting kingdom, which we hope for hereafter ; to tremble at the threats of eternal torments ; to despise all that passes with time, and ever to aspire after the good things of the Lord in the land of the living. He was also ever ready, to give ghostly counsel to all that came to him, to hearken to their demands, to cure their diseases ; to accommodate their differences &c ; and not only to attend to the private necessities of particulars, but much more to every occasion, in which he might be of service to the common good of the church : dictating sometimes letters, to this end, to prelates, to governors, and even to the emperor himself. Thus he usually employed his time from the third hour after

ter mid-day till the sunset: and then he gave his benediction to the people, which they received with great reverence; and so he bid adieu to men, to converse with his God alone.

At length the time being come, in which God had decreed to crown the patience and labours of his servant, with eternal glory; upon a friday (anno Christi 460) being bowed down, according to his custom, in prayer, he gave up his happy soul into the hands of him, whom he had so constantly and so faithfully served. His body, after his death, remained in the same posture from friday till sunday in the afternoon; no one in the mean time knowing that he was dead: because it was no unusual thing for the Saint to pass whole days in prayer, so as to omit his ordinary times of speaking to the people. But on sunday in the afternoon, his disciple Antonius going up the pillar, by a ladder, found that he was dead: and immediately gave private notice of it to the patriarch of Antioch, and to the governor of the province; in order to prevent any tumult, that might be raised by the people, contending about his body. The patriarch Martyrius, accompanied with six other bishops, and escorted by the governor, with 6000 foldiers, came without delay; and taking the body of the Saint down from the pillar, carried it away with great solemnity, to Antioch, and entered it there. And our Lord was pleased to work many great miracles, by his intercession, as well at his monument in that city, as at his pillar, where he lived and died. His name is recorded in the Roman martyrology, on the fifth of January.

There were divers other Saints of the name of Simeon, who are also celebrated in church history. Amongst the rest St. *Simeon the ancient*, whose life is also given by Theodoret in his Philotheus, (of whom he relates that he had the very lions of the desert at his beck) St. *Simeon Stylites* the younger, who also passed

fed his life upon a pillar; and is recorded in the Roman martyrology, September the third: *St. Simeon*, surnamed *Salus*, whose name is registred in the same martyrology, July the first, with the following elogium. *“At Emesa, St. Simeon confessor, surnamed ‘Salus, who became a fool for Christ: but his profound ‘wisdom God declared by great miracles.’*



S T. E U T H Y M I U S.

From his life, by Cyrillus, a faithful cotemporary writer.

EUTHYMIUS, surnamed *the great*, was born at Melitene in the lesser Armenia, of noble and vertuous parents, anno 377. He was a child of prayer, his parents having obtained him of God, after a long barrenness, by the intercession of St. Polyeuctus the martyr; and having dedicated him to God from his mothers womb. At the age of three years, he was put in the hands of the holy bishop Otreus; and from that time was brought up, like another Samuel, in the temple of God, in the exercises of an early piety, and, in the study of the holy scriptures: on which he constantly meditated; even in those leisure hours, which others of his age spend in their diversions. He was ordained lector, when yet a boy; and gradually promoted to the higher orders; giving great edification in them all, till he was thought worthy of the priestly functions: and then had the conduct and direction, by commission from the bishop, of all the monasteries of the diocese of Melitene. In the mean time, it was his custom, to retire as often as he could, from all other business, to attend to God and himself, in solitude and silence: (to which he had a great attraction even from his childhood) to spend a great part of his time in prayer, in the churches of the martyrs; and to make an annual retreat, all alone by himself, during the whole time of lent, in a desert mountain, at some distance from the city. His love for solitude and retirement, still encreasing upon him, at length determined him to withdraw himself for good and all from his own country, his friends, and his acquaintance, and to go into the Holy land. Where after
visiting

visiting, and reverencing the places, consecrated by the mysteries of our redemption; he chose for his abode a solitary place, about six miles from Jerusalem, called Pharan: in the neighbourhood of a *Laura*, or residence of divers religious men, living in separate cells, at some distance from one another; but meeting for their devotions in the same church: as the hermites of Camaldulum do now.

This solitude was quite agreeable to his inclinations to retirement and silence: and therefore he made himself a cell here; employing his hands in making mats, or in other manual labours, (that he might live without being burdensome to any one, and might be able to relieve such as were in want) but having his heart all the while on God; and making it his whole study to please him. Here divine providence brought him to be acquainted with a holy solitary, named Theoctistus, who had his cell not far off, and who followed the same manner of life. And the likeness of their dispositions, united them so closely together, in the bands of a most perfect friendship and charity, that they seemed to have but one heart and one soul. Amongst other exercises of piety, these two servants of God, never failed to make every year a spiritual retreat, which they began after the Epiphany, and continued till Palm-Sunday. At this time, they quitted their cells, and retired into the wilderness of Cutila: and there being wholly separated from all conversation with mortals, they spent their whole time with God, in prayer and contemplation: till, palm-sunday being come, they returned home again, laden with the spiritual riches, which they had acquired in their retreat, to offer them up to our Lord Jesus Christ, at the festival of his passion and resurrection.

Euthymius had practised this for some years; when he and Theoctistus, going according to their custom

custom into the wilderness, were conducted by providence to the banks of a rapid torrent: where they found a large cavern of very difficult access; which they embraced as a place assigned them by heaven for their habitation: and here they lived for some time, quite remote from all human society; and having no other food, but the wild herbs of the desert. But as the Almighty designed to bring about the salvation of many souls, by the means of these his servants, he did not suffer the place of their abode to be long unknown. They were first discovered by certain shepherds; who published to the neighbouring village, the place and manner of their living. This brought them visits from the inhabitants; who willingly furnished them with the necessaries for their temporal life, and received from them in exchange most wholesome instructions, and exhortations in order to their eternal life.

It was not long after this before the monks of Pharan also came to visit them: and the sanctity of their discourse, and of their life, moved two of them, Marinus and Lucas, (who were afterwards great Saints) and by degrees many others, from other places, to put themselves under their conduct. In-somuch that after some time, they built a monastery in the same place, and turned their cavern into a church. The direction and superintendency of this monastery, Euthymius committed to Theoctistus; whilst he himself enjoyed the sweets of his beloved silence and repose, seated with Mary at the feet of our Lord: yet so, as often to interrupt his contemplation, by labouring to purify the souls of his brethren from their stains, and like a skilfull physician, to apply proper remedies for the cure of all their evils. For the religious came daily to him, to discover their most secret thoughts to him; and to receive from him the rules and lessons of a spiritual
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life: and Theoctistus for his part did nothing without his advice, and concurrence.

He spoke to them all, with the affection of a father; and constantly inculcated to them: 'That they, who by their religious profession had renounced the world, and the things of the world; should make it their principal study to exercise themselves in humility, and obedience; and to divest themselves of their own will: that they should have always the hour of their death before their eyes; should tremble at the apprehension of a miserable eternity; and continually aspire, with most ardent desires, after the kingdom of heaven. That they should also employ themselves, without ceasing, in manual labours; more especially if they are of an age, in which the passions of youth stand in need of being kept under; for in that case the body must be brought down by labour, that it may be obliged to submit to the spirit: and that they should ever remember both the example and the doctrine of St. Paul; and that he says, 1 Thes. iii. 10 *If any man will not work, neither let him eat.* &c.' He also very much recommended to them silence; particularly in the church, and at their meals: and he could not endure to see any of the young religious, by a motion of their own will, affect to appear more austere than the rest in their fasting: for he desired, that according to the precept of the Gospel, they should hide their good works, rather than make a show of them: and he preferred that kind of abstinence, as the most commendable of all, which at every meal, and upon every occasion, restrains the appetite from taking its fill, and always retrenches, without ostentation, some part of what it craves. He added, that they should always be upon their guard, to resist all irregular desires; to carry their arms always about with them, to defend themselves against their invisible enemies; and that they

they should meditate day and night upon the law of God.

Whilst Euthymius was in this monastery, Aspebet, governor of a Canton of the Saracens, brought his son Terebon, who had quite lost the use of one half of his body, by a dead palsy, to be cured by the Saint. The religious, seeing a multitude of these barbarians coming towards their monastery, were all in a fright: but Theoctistus encouraged them (for Euthymius was in his spiritual exercises) and going forth to meet the band, he asked them what they wanted? Aspebet answered, we want to see Euthymius. He is in his retirement, said Theoctistus, and will neither see, nor speak to any one till saturday. Then Aspebet shewed him his son (whose whole right side was withered up, so as to appear quite dead) and made a sign to the youth, to tell him his case: who related, how having been struck with this illness in Persia, where his father was then, in the service of king Isdegerdes, they had employed there, in order to his cure, not only all the natural remedies of physick, but also the secrets of magick, but to no effect. And that since he came with his father into Arabia, they had again tried new experiments upon him, but all to no purpose. Wherefore finding that there was no succour to be had from man, he had turned his thoughts towards the great God, that made man; and had prayed to him one night, with great fervour, to restore him to his health; promising in that case, that he would dedicate himself to his service, and become a Christian. And that after this prayer he had fallen asleep, and seen in a dream a venerable monk, who said his name was Euthymius; that he lived upon the bank of the torrent, in the wilderness, near the road that leads to Jericho, at about ten miles distance from Jerusalem: and that if he desired to be cured, and was disposed to fulfil his promise, he should come to

him, and that God would restore him again to his health.

Theoſtiftus having heard this, went in, and related the whole to Euthymius : and both of them concluding that the viſion muſt have come from God ; the Saint interrupted his retreat, upon this occaſion, and going out, prayed over the young man ; and made the ſign of the croſs upon him ; at which, he was in an inſtant perfectly cured ; to the great aſtoniſhment of all the barbarians there preſent, who were all converted upon the ſpot ; and after proper inſtructions, received baptiſm. Aſpebet took the name of Peter, and made ſuch progreſs in Chriſtian piety, as to be afterwards ordained biſhop of the Saracens ; and Maris his brother-in-law, quitted the world, for good and all, to become a diſciple of St. Euthymius.

The fame of this great miracle, being ſpread through all the country, brought ſuch numbers from all parts to viſit the Saint, and to ſeek from him the cure of their maladies ; which they uſually obtained by his prayers : that partly to fly from the danger of vain-glory ; and partly to enjoy more freely his beloved ſolitude ; taking with him a holy man, whoſe name was Domitian, he privately withdrew himſelf from his monastery into the deſart of Ruban, that lies more to the ſouth, near the lake of Sodom. Here for ſome time he fixt his abode in a high mountain, on the top of which he found a well, and ſome ancient ruins, with which he built a chapel, and an altar ; living all the while on the wild herbs, he found there. From hence he went to the deſart of Ziph, (where David formerly had concealed himſelf, when he was perſecuted by Saul) which place pleaſed him much. But it was not long before the inhabitants of a neighbouring town, called Ariſtobulias, found him out ; by occaſion of a young man, poſſeſſed by an evil ſpirit, who had often the
name,

name of Euthymius in his mouth ; and was wonderfully delivered, as soon as he was brought within sight of the Saint. This miracle brought many disciples to him : for whom the people of the neighbourhood built a monastery ; which the Saint for some time directed, in the ways of religious perfection. But his love of solitude induced him to quit this monastery also, where he found himself much importuned, and distracted with visits from all parts ; and to seek out, with his companion Domitian, a place more agreeable to his inclinations to retirement and silence : which he met with in a cavern, not far from his former monastery. Theoctistus, whom he had left superior there, with all the rest of the brethren, would gladly have had him return again to them : but the most they could obtain of him, was that he would come to them every Lord's day, and be present at their assemblies.

Aspebet, now Peter, hearing where the Saint was, brought to him a great number of the Saracens, who were desirous of being Christians ; whom Euthymius instructed and baptized. And as these new converts were willing to be still under his direction ; he appointed them a place not far off, for the building themselves a church, and other dwellings : where he often visited them, and preached the word of life to them : till finding them sufficiently grounded in Christian piety ; he procured them a priest and some deacons for the care of their church, and the administration of the sacraments. And as many more were daily coming, and the number of his converts became very considerable ; he proposed to Juvenal, the patriarch of Jerusalem, to give them also a bishop, who might have the charge of all the Saracens of Palestine : the patriarch readily complied with the Saint's proposition ; and ordained Aspebet, or Peter, to this function : by whose means God daily added many others to his church.

Hitherto Euthymius, through his love of solitude, had address'd all such, as resorted to him, in order to embrace a religious life, to the monastery of Theoctistus: till he was admonish'd in a vision, to build a *laura*, and a church, for the receiving such, as desired to put themselves under his conduct; which was soon filled with a multitude of religious souls. The number of the monks, joined with the barrenness of the place, made it difficult to find sufficient provisions in that wilderness: but the divine providence never forsook his servants, whose whole care was to please him. It happened one day, that four hundred Armenians, in returning from Jerusalem towards the Jordan, missed their way, and came down to the *laura* of Euthymius. The Saint seeing them, immediately gave orders, that they should be hospitably entertained. Domitian represented to him, that the community was reduced to so great streights, that they had not bread enough for the brethren, not even for one meal. The Saint, full of confidence in his God, bid him go to the bakehouse, and see what he should find there. He obeyed, and found the room quite full of bread, and of other provisions, in such a quantity, that he could hardly thrust the door open.

God also favoured his servant with the gift of prophesy: of which my author sets down several remarkable instances. And as to the manner of life, which he here followed; he assures us, from the testimony of those, that were the best acquainted with him, that he was never seen to eat, but on the saturday, or the sunday; that he never broke silence of his own accord, nor spoke at all, but when necessity obliged him to it; that he never laid himself down to sleep, but slept sitting, &c. He adds, that he was a close imitator of the great St. Arsenius: and was highly delighted with hearing, from the religious, who came out of Egypt, the particulars of his life

life and conversation. He had always before him, those words of his: *Arsenius, Arsenius, on what account didst thou leave the world?* And he strove to copy out in his own practice, all the great examples that Saint had given, of humility, recollection, poverty of spirit, love of silence and solitude, perpetual compunction of heart, and profusion of tears in the sight of God; and his continual watching, fasting, and prayer.

There happened in those days, so great a drought in Palestine, that it seemed, according to the expression of the scripture, as if the heavens were of brass, and the earth of iron. The cisterns and receptacles, which they had made for water, were filled with nothing but dust: and the whole country was reduced to the utmost extremity, for want of rain. As the evil encreased daily, an infinite multitude of the people of the towns and villages round about, carrying crosses in their hands, and singing *Kyrie eleison*, to implore the divine mercy, came to the Saint; on the very day, when he was going out, according to his custom, to make his retreat in the wilderness, as a preparation for Easter. The sight of their distress, moved him to compassion: and he spake to them as follows. ‘ My children, as for
‘ my part, I am but a wretched sinner, and stand
‘ more in need than any other of the mercy of God;
‘ especially at this time, in which we see his wrath
‘ thus enkindled against sinners: and therefore I am
‘ not so bold, as to dare to lift up my eyes to him:
‘ as I know that he sends these afflictions, when he
‘ pleases; and that, as no one can shut, when he is
‘ pleased to open, so no one can open when he is
‘ pleased to shut. Our sins have separated us from
‘ him: we have disfigured his image; we have de-
‘ filed his temple: we have suffered ourselves to be
‘ carried away by our passions: envy and avarice
‘ reign amongst us; and our hatred for one another

renders us hateful to him. But as he is all goodness ; and his mercy has no bounds ; let us all prostrate ourselves before his face, and pray to him from the very bottom of our hearts ; and I make no doubt, but that he will forgive us ; and shew us his fatherly love, by the seasonable aid, he will send us : for as David says : *The Lord is near to all them that call on him.* When he had spoke thus, the people all cried out, begging that he would pray for them : whereupon after prescribing to them all, to join in prayer to the Lord, with the greatest fervour they were capable of, he went in with his religious into their oratory ; and lying prostrate on the ground, with many tears implored the divine mercy. When behold on a sudden a wind arose, the heavens were darkened with thick clouds, and there fell immediately such an abundance of rain, as quite soaked the whole earth : and was followed by the most fruitful year, that ever had been known in Palestine, in the memory of man.

The Saint had an extraordinary zeal, for the maintaining the purity of the Catholick faith : insomuch, that he, who was otherwise the meekest of men, could not endure the obstinate abettors of condemned errors. In his days, a wicked heresy was broached by Eutyches, a monk of Constantinople, who denied the distinction of the divine and human nature in Christ. His impious doctrine was condemned by the great council of Chalcedon. But there were not wanting many children of iniquity, who instead of submitting themselves to this great authority, spread abroad many slanders against that council, and misrepresentations of the Catholick doctrine ; by which they alienated the minds of many from the faith. One of the chiefest of these was Theodosius, a monk of Palestine, who under a religious habit covered a diabolical spirit ; and by his wicked insinuations, and downright calumnies, prejudiced the mind of

the

the empress Eudocia (who was at that time in Palestine) against the council: and by the means of her interest, and the great liberalities she exercised to the religious, gained the greatest part of them also over to the Eutychian faction: excepting the disciples of St. Euthymius. And not content with this, he intruded himself into the patriarchal see of Jerusalem; declared an open war against all that opposed themselves to his impiety; banished the Orthodox bishops from their sees, and even embrewd his hands in the blood of some of them. In the mean time Euthymius opposed himself as a wall for the house of Israel; and constantly refused to have any manner of communication with this false patriarch. And as he was continually plying him with messages, in order to bring him over to his side, by reason of the neighbourhood of the laura of the Saint to the city of Jerusalem; he assembled his disciples, and having powerfully exhorted them to a constancy in the Catholick faith, he withdrew into the desert of Ruban; and he remained there, till the usurper was obliged to leave Jerusalem, and the patriarch Juvenal was restored to his see.

In the mean time, he brought back to the church, an excellent anchoret, whose name was Gerasimus; who had been also imposed upon, with many others, and drawn in to be an abettor of the impious Theodosius. Till hearing of the eminent sanctity of Euthymius, he went to confer with him in the wilderness of Ruban, and by his heavenly discourses was fully reclaimed from his error; and conceived a very great regret, for having suffered himself to be deceived: for which he did severe penance. His example was followed by four other anchorets, who in like manner renounced the communion of Theodosius. And as for Gerasimus, he afterwards built a laura, and a monastery, near the Jordan, where he trained up many souls, in great perfection; and
both

both lived himself, and died, in such extraordinary sanctity, as to have his name enrolled amongst the Saints. See the Roman martyrology, March the fifth.

And now the empress Eudocia, after having a long time stood out against the solicitations of her nearest relations, began to open her eyes to the Catholick truth. For her instruction therein, she sent to St. Simeon Stylites, as one, to whom God imparted extraordinary lights, to direct souls in the way of salvation: and she opened to him, by her messenger, the bishop Anastasius, the whole state of her interior. That Saint encouraged her, to disengage herself totally from the nets of Satan, in which her soul had been entangled, by the means of the impious Theodosius: and for this purpose, he exhorted her to address herself to St. Euthymius, and to receive from his mouth, the pure waters of life. She did so, and by his means, was reconciled to the Catholick church: and her example was followed by great numbers both of the religious, and of the laity. This princess, after having built a great many churches, monasteries, and hospitals, had conceived a design of extending her beneficence also to the *laura* of St. Euthymius, which the Saint had founded in great poverty. But before she had declared her mind to any one living, Euthymius, who by a divine light, often discovered the secrets of hearts, told her: ' Daughter, your departure out of this world, is ' near at hand. Wherefore instead of busying your- ' self with all these cares, attend to your own interi- ' our: and think of preparing yourself for your ' journey hence, rather than of settling revenues up- ' on us: we want nothing else of you, but that you ' would remember us in your prayers.' The empress followed his advice, and some months after made a happy end.

Amongst

Amongst other favours, which our Lord did to his servant Euthymius, my author relates, from the testimony of the anchoret Cyriacus, who learnt it from two eye-witnesses; that one day when the Saint was saying mass, a bright fire was seen to come down upon his head, which encompassed both him, and his disciple Domitian, and remained from the *Sanctus*, till after the communion. He was also often favoured with the vision of Angels, at the time of his offering the holy sacrifice: and when he distributed the holy communion, he saw in spirit the different dispositions of the communicants; perceiving how the sacred host cast rays of light upon some; and darkness upon others, who by being unworthy, received it to their own condemnation. The Saint was so touched with this kind of vision, that he was perpetually inculcating to his religious, the necessity of keeping their conscience always pure, that they might worthily approach to these divine mysteries: that *holy things, were for holy persons*: and therefore if at any time, any of them found their conscience charged with the guilt, either of hatred, or of the desire of revenge, upon receiving an injury, or of envy, or of wrath, or of pride, or of speaking evil of their neighbour, or of entertaining loose thoughts, or criminal desires; or of any other vice, they should by no means presume to approach to the divine table, till they had in a proper manner, expiated their sins by penance.

And now the man of God, after having passed about sixty-seven years in the desarts of Palestine, which by this time he had peopled with a multitude of Saints; understood by divine revelation, that the time of his laying down his earthly tabernacle was at hand. It was his custom, after the Octave of the Epiphany, to make his annual retreat, and to withdraw himself into the remoter parts of the wilderness; where he continued in spiritual exercises, till the

the holy week. Wherefore his disciples Elias and Martyrius (both of them afterwards, according to his prediction, patriarchs of Jerufalem) who were used to accompany him on this occasion, came to him on the octave of that festival, to ask him, if they were not to set out with him, on the following day? The Saint told them, he would spend that week with them at home, in the *laura*; but that on saturday at midnight he should leave them. He passed the vigil of the feast of St. Antony (Jan. 17) with them in prayer: and after the morning lauds, he told them, this was the last vigil, he should keep with them. Then having ordered all his religious to be assembled, he made them an excellent discourse: telling them, his hour was now at hand; and conjuring them, if they had any regard or affection for him, to shew it, by faithfully and constantly practising the lessons he had taught them. In particular, he recommended to them *charity* and *humility*, as the two principal ingredients of Christian perfection: telling them, that if all Christians were bound to exercise themselves in these virtues; much more they, who by their religious profession, had in a particular manner, consecrated themselves to Jesus Christ; to the end that being freed from all secular cares and affections, they might have no other solicitude but to please him. ‘ Labour then, said he, my brethren, with
‘ all your power, to keep both your bodies and
‘ minds ever chaste: continue to praise and glorify
‘ God, all of you together: practise with all possible
‘ diligence the rule he has given us: do all that
‘ you can, to comfort the afflicted; and to fortify,
‘ by your exhortations and instructions, such a-
‘ mongst the brethren, as lye under temptations;
‘ that they may not fall a prey to the enemy: let
‘ your gate be always open to hospitality; divide
‘ the little you have with the poor and indigent;
‘ and

‘ and the divine bounty will not fail to furnish you
 ‘ with all that shall be needful for yourselves.’

After having spoken to this effect, he asked them, whom they desired to have for their superior, after his death? They all, with one voice, desired it might be Domitian. That cannot be, said the Saint, for he shall not survive me above seven days. Whereupon they made choice of Elias: to whom the Saint earnestly recommended the care of his flock. After this they retired, and Domitian alone remained with the Saint: who, after three days, departed to our Lord, at the precise time he had foretold: and his happy soul was seen at that very time, by St. Gerasimus, carried up by Angels towards her heavenly country. His individual companion Domitian, within seven days, took the same happy road; being invited on the eve of his death, in a vision in his sleep, by St. Euthymius, to come with him to the regions of light, and life everlasting, where they should both live together forever, in the kingdom of their Father. St. Euthymius has a place in the Roman martyrology on the twentieth of January.



ST. THEODOSIUS CENOBIARCHA.

From a cotemporary writer, published by Bollandus.

THEODOSIUS, furnamed *Cenobiarcha*, from the multitude of religious, whom he ruled and directed in a conventual life, was born near Cesarea in Cappadocia, anno 423. He was educated by his parents in the fear of God; and from his tender years gave such proofs of virtue and piety, that he was ordained lector, to read the holy scriptures to the faithful in the church. What he read to others sunk into his own heart, and made a deep impression there. Particularly he was much affected with those words of God to Abraham, Gen. xii. as if they had been spoken to himself, *Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, &c.* as also with that promise of our Lord in the Gospel, of giving everlasting life, to them that should leave all things for the love of him: and by frequent meditation on these and such like passages of holy writ, he was at length determined to follow God's call, and to forsake all things in this world, that he might more securely find the kingdom of heaven.

In consequence of this resolution, he set out, to go and visit the holy places at Jerusalem: taking Antioch in his way; in the neighbourhood of which, St. Simeon Stylites was then living upon his pillar. Theodosius went to see this Saint, desirous to recommend himself to his prayers, and to receive his benediction. As soon as he was come near the pillar, Simeon cried out, *welcome Theodosius, servant of God*; and presently desired he would come up, by a ladder, to him. And there, after mutual embraces, he foretold to him, by the Spirit of God, all that should afterwards befall him: and in particular that he should have the conduct of a numerous flock, and should
rescue

rescue, by the assistance of divine grace, many souls from the jaws of the infernal wolf. Theodosius was confirmed in his good resolution, by this conference with so great a Saint: and so continued his journey to Jerusalem: where after reverencing the holy places, he went, and put himself under the direction of an eminent servant of God, called Longinus, who dwelt in a small lodge by himself, in the tower of David. And partly under him, partly under Marinus and Lucas, disciples of St. Euthymius, he learnt the true science of the Saints, with such perfection, as to become himself a most excellent master and teacher, both by word and example, of this heavenly discipline.

Some time after this he was moved, by divine inspiration, to seek a more retired solitude; where he might lead an anachoretic life. For this purpose, withdrawing himself into the wilderness, he made choice of a cavern, which he found on the side of a mountain, for the place of his habitation, for the remainder of the days of his mortality: and he lived there, for the space of thirty years, in a mortal body, as if he had been an immortal spirit; in the constant exercise of watching, fasting, and prayer; together with that continual recollection of thought, that fervour of spirit, that humility of heart, and that abundance of tears; which could not fail, to draw down plentifully upon him the graces and gifts of the Spirit of God. His only food all this time was dates, or pulse moistened in cold water, or wild herbs, without any bread at all. He embraced labours, with as much ardour, as others do their pleasures; and fled from pleasures, as much as others do from labours. He desired nothing so much as to live hidden from the eyes of men: but it was impossible for him to keep himself so concealed in his cavern, but that the bright light of his extraordinary sanctity broke out, and casting its rays far and near,
invited

invited many to him; who were desirous to put themselves under his conduct, and to learn of him the secrets of religious perfection. He made difficulty at first of receiving any into his company: but his charity for the souls of his neighbours, prevailed over his love of solitude: and the great blessing God gave to his conduct and direction of souls, shewed that it was God's holy will he should be thus employed.

The number of his disciples in the beginning did not exceed six or seven, who all lived with him in his cavern. This number gradually encreased: and as they all made it their business to seek in the first place the kingdom of God, with all their power, the divine providence never failed to add to them the necessaries of this present life. One Easter eve, when the Saint had now twelve disciples with him in his cavern, it happened that they had nothing at all to eat; and what troubled them most of all was, that they had not even bread for the divine sacrifice. This they represented to their holy superiour, who being full of confidence in God, bid them nevertheless prepare the altar, for the celebrating mass on Easter-day. When behold about sunset, Providence sent a man to their cavern, with two mules, laden with bread and other provisions in such quantity, as abundantly sufficed them till whitsuntide. Another time, when they were reduced to the like streights, Providence sent them a supply, in a manner still more remarkable; which happened thus: A man was leading his horse, laden with provisions, to some other place: but when he came into the neighbourhood of the cavern, where the servants of God dwelt, he could not by any means make his horse go forward: so that conceiving there must be something supernatural in the case, he gave him the bridle, to go which way he list. The horse being left to himself, immediately, as if he were guided by an invisible hand,

hand, went strait up to the cavern: where the master perceiving the distress of this holy community, relieved them very plentifully; and glorified God for having thus wonderfully made use of him, as the instrument of his divine goodness, for the feeding his servants.

But the number of the disciples of the Saint (and amongst them of persons considerable for their birth, and fortune in the world) daily encreasing; his cavern was by much too little for them: so that they prevailed upon him, tho' not without much difficulty, to consent to the building a spacious monastery, and a church; hard by the cavern, in the very place appointed to him by heaven, by the sign of the coals in his censar taking fire of themselves. Here he received all that came to him: and as their number was very great, he was obliged afterwards to add several other buildings, as well for the spiritual, as for the corporal necessities, of the multitudes, which resorted to him. No where was hospitality exercised with greater affection than in this monastery, or with more chearfulness and joy: for amongst all the virtues of the Saint, his tender compassion and charity for his neighbours, and diligence in relieving all their necessities, seemed to claim the first place. All that were in distress were welcome to him: he even built several hospitals and infirmaries about his monastery: for the entertaining of them. And God was pleased more than once to testify, by miracle, his approbation of this extensive charity of his servant. Thus in the time of a great famine, when an incredible multitude of people flockt to the monastery, upon a Palm-Sunday; and the religious, not having where with to feed so great a crowd, would have kept the gates shut; the Saint trusting in his God, bid them open the gates, and give them all to eat. And though the number was so great, as to fill every part of the house, yet by a miracle not unlike that wrought by our

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Lord in feeding the 5000 in the defart, they all eat and were filled; and there still remained more bread than they had at first. The like to which happened also another time, upon the feast of the annunciation of the blessed Virgin.

As to the disciples of our Saint, the number of those, who put themselves under his conduct, was so great, that my author assures us, that during the time of his superiority, he buried with his own hands no fewer than six hundred and ninety three religious men, whom he had trained up to all sanctity; and that his successor St. Sophronius did as much for four hundred more; who both in life and death followed the same happy course. He adds that many illustrious bishops and abbots were taken out of this monastery: that many others, who had been here brought up under our Saint, betook themselves afterwards to an anachoretical life, in which they were eminent for holiness: that many, who had followed the profession of arms, quitted the service of Cesar, to enrol themselves here amongst the soldiers of Jesus Christ, and to learn of Theodosius, his heavenly discipline: that many who enjoyed posts of honour, and were eminent in the world; many, who were renowned for their learning, came also to our Saint, to take up under his direction the sweet yoke of Christian simplicity and humility, and to become his scholars, in the school of truth, and in the study of the science of the Saints. His conduct towards all that were under him, was ever regulated by a heavenly prudence; he accommodated his directions and prescriptions, to the different exigences and dispositions, as well as to the strength of his disciples. When any were faulty, instead of penances, he only used words of admonition, correction, and exhortation: but words, animated with that spirit, which made them penetrate into the very midst of their souls. In these corrections, he had the secret of associating in such manner a wonderful meekness and

and sweetness, with a just severity, as to make himself at once be both feared and loved. The lessons of all virtues, which he gave to others, were enforced by his own practice. His conversation was always extremely edifying and instructive: his spirit always attentive to God; whether alone, or in company; or in whatsoever manner he was employed: he was always calm and even in his temper, and always the same: his greatest delight was in reading the holy scriptures, which he made the subject of his perpetual meditation, day and night, even till the end of his life. Our Saint had not been brought up to any degree of secular learning: nor had ever studied the rules of humane eloquence: yet in the discourses, which he made to his disciples, he far excelled the greatest orators, in the point of moving and exciting the affections, and inflaming the heart: because his words did not proceed from human wisdom; but from divine grace, and from the Spirit of God. He was a great admirer and imitator of St. Basil: and in his words, and with his spirit, addressed himself often to his monks, to the following effect. ‘ I beseech you, ‘ my brethren, by the charity of our Lord Jesus ‘ Christ, who delivered himself up to death for our ‘ sins; let us, once for all, be quite in earnest, and ‘ seriously set about the business of saving our souls. ‘ Let us conceive a lively sorrow, for having passed ‘ our time hitherto so unprofitably: let us now at ‘ least begin to fight manfully in the service of God, ‘ and of his Son Jesus Christ; that we may be made ‘ partakers one day in their glory. Let us shake off ‘ this sluggishness, and laziness, which makes us still ‘ love to put off from day to day the labouring in ‘ good earnest to advance in virtue. For if we let ‘ ourselves be deceived by the enemy; and so be ‘ found void of good works here; we shall have no ‘ pretensions hereafter to the joys of heaven; but ‘ shall lament in vain for having let slip the time and

‘ means of working out our salvation, when it shall
 ‘ not be in our power to recover them. The time
 ‘ of this life, and that of the life to come, are widely
 ‘ distant: the one is the time of penance, and the
 ‘ other of reward: the one is the time of labour, and
 ‘ the other of repose: the one is the time of suf-
 ‘ fering, and the other of consolation. At present
 ‘ God is infinitely good to them that turn from their
 ‘ evil ways, and are converted to him: but then
 ‘ he shall be a just and inexorable judge, who will
 ‘ call us to a strict account for all our thoughts,
 ‘ words and actions: he is patient now, but he shall
 ‘ be terrible then. How long then shall we delay to
 ‘ comply with, and to obey the voice of Jesus Christ,
 ‘ who invites us to an eternal inheritance? What?
 ‘ shall we never awake out of this long and deep
 ‘ sleep? Shall we not now at least renounce our ill
 ‘ spent life; to embrace evangelical perfection? Ah!
 ‘ shall we not tremble at the thoughts of that
 ‘ dreadful day of the Lord; when he shall receive
 ‘ into his kingdom, those whose good works shall place
 ‘ at his right hand; and shall condemn to eternal
 ‘ fire, those who, being void of good works, shall be
 ‘ placed at his left? We say indeed that we desire
 ‘ to go to heaven: but we don’t labour in earnest,
 ‘ about the means of acquiring and securing to our-
 ‘ selves this eternal kingdom: but it is in vain for
 ‘ us, if we neglect to put in practice what our Lord
 ‘ has commanded us, to flatter ourselves with the
 ‘ expectation of receiving from him that reward,
 ‘ and that glory, which those only shall have, who
 ‘ shall fight generously until death against sin.’ So
 far the Saint, in the words of St. Basil.

St. Theodosius had also a great zeal for maintain-
 ing the Catholick faith, against all condemned he-
 resies. Of which he gave signal proofs, during the
 reign of the emperor Anastasius, who was a great
 abetter of the Eutychian heresy, condemned by the
 general

general council of Chalcedon. This prince, in hopes of drawing our Saint over to favour his impious tenets, sent him a very considerable sum of money; by way of an alms, as he pretended, for the relief of the poor, and the comfort of his religious, in their sicknesses. The Saint thought it not prudence, to give the emperor an offence, by refusing his charity; though he apprehended an ill design, covered under this specious pretence. Not long after, Anastasius sent to desire of him a confession of his faith, agreeable to the Eutychian heresy. Theodosius returned him an answer, in which instead of coming in to his measures, he declared himself ready to suffer a thousand deaths, rather than to betray his conscience, or consent to heresy. The emperor, though disappointed, dissembled his resentment, and proceeded no further at that time. But not long after, he furiously attacked the Catholic faith, and raised a violent persecution against the professors of it. In this great necessity of the church, when the orthodox pastors were either banished from their churches; or intimidated into a silence, which gave great advantage to error; when the hereticks triumphed, and a great part of the people either joined with them, or were dubious what way to take: the Saint seeing the dreadful danger, to which the sheep of Christ were exposed, in the midst of these wolves; fearless of the rage of the emperor, and of the violence of his officers and ministers; went boldly into the great church of Jerusalem, in the time of the divine service, and going up to the tribune, from whence the holy Scriptures used to be read to the people, pronounced with a lowd voice an anathema against all that did not receive, and revere like the four Gospels, the four general councils (of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon) in which the orthodox doctrine, with relation to the blessed Trinity, and to the Incarnation of the Son of God,

had been defined and declared, against the Arians, Macedonians, Nestorians and Eutychians. This courageous profession of his faith, in so publick and solemn a manner, made a wonderful impresson on the minds of the people, in favour of the Catholick religion: and struck all that heard him with such an astonishment, that none of the adversaries, as he passed through the crowd, to go out of the church, durst so much as open their mouths to speak one word to him; much less offer to stop him. After this, taking with him some of his disciples, and of the other holy inhabitants of the desert, without loss of time, he went about to all the neighbouring cities and towns; labouring to encourage, and to confirm the faithful, to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim those that had gone astray; and to put a stop to the progress, which that wicked heresy, backed by the power of the emperor, was daily making. This zeal of the Saint quickly drew upon him the indignation of his prince; who condemned him to a perpetual banishment: little thinking how soon the sentence of death was going to be pronounced against himself by the king of kings. After the unhappy death of this persecutor, Justin, who succeeded in the empire, immediately restored peace to the church, and recalled all the exiled bishops to their own sees; and the Saint from his banishment.

St. Theodosius was also illustrious for his miracles: of which my author gives a very remarkable instance, in the case of a woman, suddenly cured of an inveterate cancer in her breast, by coming behind him in the church, and touching her breast with some part of his habit. He was also favoured with prophetic light: as appeared, when one day he ordered all the religious to be assembled, out of their usual time; and when they asked him the reason, he answered with tears: ‘We must pray brethren, we must pray, for I see the wrath of God enkindled against the
East.’

‘*East.*’ So they called the district of the patriarch of Antioch. Now many days did not pass, before the news came, that at the very time he spoke those words, the city of Antioch was quite destroyed by an earthquake.

The Saint, notwithstanding the austerity of his life, and all his labours and conflicts, lived to the age of one hundred and five. And that nothing might be wanting to his crown, our Lord was pleased in the last part of his life, to give him an opportunity of exercising an extraordinary patience; by sending him a tedious and most painful disorder, which confined him to his bed, for a whole twelve-month, under the anguish of most insupportable pains. But how great soever his sufferings might be, he kept always the same tranquillity of spirit; and never shewed, by word, or action, the least sign of impatience. A good old man, that was with him in his illness, perceiving how very much he suffered, suggested to him, to beg of God to ease him of his pains. The Saint shewing by his countenance, how much he disliked the suggestion, said to him: ‘Pray father, never speak to me any more in this manner. For my part, as often as any such thought has offered itself to me, I have always rejected it as a temptation. For since our good works (if we have done any) have already received their reward in this world, by the esteem and applause, they have acquired us from the world: what grounds can we have to expect the consolations and rewards of the world to come, if we do not suffer, and are not afflicted here? Should we not rather have all reason to fear, lest it should be then objected to us: friend *remember that in thy life time thou didst receive good things, and hadst thy comforts?*’

Three days before his death; God revealed to his servant, the time that he should call him out of this place of banishment to his eternal home. Where-

fore having exhorted his religious to constancy, and perseverance in their holy vocation, and to fight manfully against all the temptations of the enemy; he sent to three neighbouring bishops: who came in all haste to visit him, and were quite penetrated with grief, to see him so near his end; whilst he, on the contrary, shewed by his chearful countenance the joy of his heart, at the approach of that happy hour for him, which was to set his soul at liberty from her long confinement in this house of clay, and to unite her eternally to her God. A little while before his departure, he lifted up his hands towards heaven, and prayed in silence: and then composing his hands upon his stomach, he quietly expired: on the eleventh of January (on which day his name is recorded in the Roman martyrology) anno 529.

Many miracles were wrought at his sepulchre: where, as my author testifies, the blind recovered their sight, the lame were made to walk &c. and a certain liquor continually distilled from his coffin, which was a sovereign remedy for all diseases.

Theodoret in his Philotheus, has given us the acts of another Saint, who was also called Theodosius: a native of Antioch, who led a life of wonderful austerity and sanctity, in a mountain of Cilicia; ever praying and singing psalms, and yet never ceasing to labour with his hands; and training up many disciples to the same exercises. In favour of these, and of the monastery he had built for them, he miraculously brought out a never failing stream of water from the hard rock: and was in so great and general esteem, even amongst the barbarians and infidels, by reason of his sanctity and miracles; that they that were in danger at sea, at a great distance off from the place of his residence, called upon the God of Theodosius; and saw the tempest immediately cease by the invocation of his name. He flourished in the fourth century.

S T. S A B A S.

From his life by Cyrillus, a faithful cotemporary writer.

SABAS, or Sabbas, was born at Mutalascus, a little town in the district of Cesarea in Cappadocia, anno 437. His father, who was an officer in the troops, being obliged to go to Alexandria in Egypt, left his son, who was but five years old, together with his estate, in the hands of an uncle, whose name was Hermias. But the evil treatment Sabas here met with from his aunt, the wife of Hermias, obliged him to leave them, and to go to another uncle, whose name was Gregory. This produced a great contention between the two uncles, which should have the care of his person, and of his estate : which gave the nephew, young as he was, so great a disgust for the world, that he resolved to leave it ; and accordingly retired to a monastery called Flavian, at three miles distance from Mutalascus : where the abbot received him amongst his religious, though as yet but a child ; and took care to have him well instructed, in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, and of all things necessary to acquit himself worthily of so holy a profession. Here one day, as he was working in the garden, he took notice of an apple tree, laden with fruit, which appeared very fair and tempting ; so that he gathered one of the apples, with a design to eat it. But immediately reflecting, that this was a trick of the old serpent, who heretofore drove our first parents out of paradise, by tempting them to eat of the forbidden fruit ; and that he has no more dangerous bait, to ensnare youth with, than that of pleasure ; he reproached himself with the fault he had committed, flung down the apple, and trod upon it ; and made a resolution, never to eat of that kind of fruit,

fruit, all his life long. From this day, he lived in an extraordinary abstinence, as to his eating and drinking: he slept no more than the necessity of nature absolutely required: and excepting the time, when his hands were lifted up to God in prayer, they were perpetually employed in some manual labours: for he feared nothing more than idleness; because of the opportunity it gives the enemy, to creep insensibly into the soul. This continual application of his, made him make such progress in all virtue, that no one of the religious, who were to the number of seventy in this community, equalled him in obedience, in humility, or in any of the exercises of an evangelical life.

His uncles, being at length reconciled together, both joined in soliciting him to come out of the monastery, and to settle himself in the world, in a married life. But he resisted all their solicitations; and with the leave of his superior, being now eighteen years old, went away to Jerusalem, in order to reverence the holy places; and then to visit the Saints, that inhabited the neighbouring deserts, that he might learn of them the true science of the saints. Here, after a short stay in the monastery of St. Pafarion, he went and flung himself at the feet of the great St. Euthymius, desiring to serve God under his holy discipline. Euthymius told him, he was too young as yet for the solitary life of the laura; but sent him to the neighbouring monastery of his friend Theoctistus; with a particular recommendation of him to the abbot, as of one, who was likely to be in time a most illustrious Saint. In this monastery, the young Sabas consecrated himself entirely to divine love. He spent the day in manual labours, and the night in fervent prayer. He was ever ready, as he was young and strong, to comfort and assist the brethren, in their respective offices; he brought in water and wood, for the uses of the community; he
never

never spared himself; he took a most particular care of the sick; he was always the first and the last at the divine office, which he ever recited with a most edifying devotion: all the religious were quite charmed with his obedience and humility; and could not without astonishment behold so great perfection in such tender years.

It happened at this time, that one of the monks obtained leave of the abbot to go to Alexandria, to dispose of an inheritance, left him by the death of his parents. Sabas, by obedience, accompanied him in this journey; and here unexpectedly met with his own father and mother; who lived at Alexandria. They were overjoyed to see him; and made most pressing instances with him, to stay with them: but Sabas, having set his hand to the plough, absolutely refused to look back: remembring what our Lord had said, that such as love father or mother more than him, are not worthy of him. ‘ They, said he, ‘ that after enrolling themselves in the service of an ‘ earthly king, run away from their colours, are ‘ severely punished for their desertion: what punishment then should not I deserve, if after having engaged myself in the service of the king of heaven, I ‘ should abandon so holy a warfare? Wherefore ‘ cease, I pray you, to persuade me to quit this way ‘ of life, which is of infinite advantage to my soul: ‘ or else you will oblige me to consider you no longer as my parents and my friends, but as strangers ‘ and enemies.’ They desired him at least, if he would not stay with them, that he would accept of a considerable sum of money, which they would have given him. But this he also refused; and it was with much ado, that they prevailed upon him to receive three pieces of silver; which as soon as he returned to the monastery, he immediately carried to the abbot: fearing nothing more than the demon of the love of money.

After

After the death of the holy abbot Theoctistus, with the approbation of St. Euthymius, he betook himself to a cavern belonging to the monastery: where he passed five days of the week in perfect solitude, fasting all the time, and working and praying. On the saturday and sunday, he performed his devotions in the monastery: and then returning to his cavern, he carried with him the materials, of which he made, every week, to the number of fifty baskets. And now St. Euthymius, who used to call him *the young old man*, by reason of his extraordinary wisdom, desired to have him nearer to himself: and therefore took him along with him, when he entered upon his yearly retreat, on the 14th of January, into the desert of Ruban; where he was accustomed to pass the holy time of lent. After they had walked for a long time together, over the barren sands of this vast wilderness, where nothing green can grow, and no water can be found; Sabas was so spent with weariness and thirst, that he could hold out no longer, but was obliged to lie down upon the ground, like one half dead. Euthymius pitying his distress, prostrated himself in the presence of God, and cried out from the bottom of his heart: ‘Thou seest, O my God, the extremity to which this young soldier of thine, who fights under thy standard, is now reduced. Be pleased to relieve and assist him, by bringing forth water out of this dry and thirsty land.’ After this prayer, he thrust his staff three times into the ground; and there presently issued forth a spring of clear and excellent water; with which Sabas quenched his thirst, and from the drinking of which, he found in himself such vigour, strength and comfort, as made him chearfully support all that he had afterwards to suffer in that desert.

After the death of St. Euthymius, Sabas retired into the wilderness near the river Jordan, which

St.

St. Gerasimus at that time illustrated with the rays of his sanctity. Here passing the night on a solitary mountain in prayer, according to his custom; he was directed by a heavenly vision, to go and take up his abode in a cavern to the east of the torrent of Siloe; with a promise, that God, who takes care of the meanest of his creatures, would not fail to be with him, and to provide for him. He presently obeyed this ordinance of heaven; and going down from the mountain, was led, as it were, by the hand to the cavern; which was on the side of a steep hill, and of very difficult access. Here he lived for some time, having no other nourishment but the herbs that grew wild about his cave; and being obliged to go six or seven miles for his water: which, with great difficulty, he carried up to his lodging, by the help of a rope, which he had made to hang down for that purpose, from his cavern to the foot of the hill. But divine providence at length conducted some of the country people to the place: who ascending by the help of the rope to the cavern, and admiring the sanctity of the servant of God, from that time forward furnished him with the little provisions he stood in need of.

After he had dwelt five years all alone, in this cavern, God inspired him to exercise his charity towards his neighbours, by receiving, instructing and directing, as many as desired to quit the world, and to put themselves under his conduct, in the way of God, and in religious perfection. To these he gave excellent lessons of a spiritual life; and appointed them separate places for building their cells, after the manner of a laura; which, in process of time, became the most considerable of any in all Palestine. He built them also a chapel, where, as often as any priests came into the wilderness, he procured that the divine mysteries should be celebrated: for as to his own part, his humility made him decline the priestly

priestly dignity, of which he deemed himself altogether unworthy. The first disciples of the Saint were all of them men of eminent virtue, full of the Spirit of God; and who lived in the wilderness, like Angels in human bodies, continually employed in singing the praises of their Maker. They were in number about threescore and ten, (amongst whom were several, who afterwards were founders and superiors of other religious communities) But in these beginnings they laboured under great inconveniences; especially for want of water, which they were forced to fetch, with great toil, from a spring that was seven miles distant. The Saint, one night in his prayer, earnestly begged of our Lord to remedy this evil, by affording his servants a source of water nearer home: when behold at the conclusion of his prayer, he heard a noise; and looking towards the place, he perceived by the moonlight a wild ass, making a hole in the ground with his foot, and then bowing down his head, as if it were to drink. The man of God conceiving by this, that his prayer was heard, went to the place, and opening the hole a little wider, brought out a stream of living water: which from that time never ceased to flow, through the midst of the laura; so as neither to be swelled in winter, nor to be diminished in summer; tho' almost all the people of that country came thither for water.

And now the number of those, that came to put themselves under his conduct, encreased exceedingly. But all of them were not led with the same spirit, as the first comers. On the contrary, some of them formed a faction against the holy abbot; and went to Salustius (who upon the death of Martyrius was lately made patriarch of Jerusalem) to desire he would give them a superior: for that Sabas was clownish and simple; and that they wanted one, who was a priest. The new patriarch, who was no stranger to the merit of the Saint, instead of regarding

ding his accusers, sent for him, and ordained him priest in their presence; and confirmed him in his charge of abbot and superior: and going with him to the laura, consecrated for him a church, and erected an altar in a spacious subterraneous den, which had been shewn to the man of God, by a pillar of fire, which reached from heaven to earth. Many others after this resorted to the Saint, to put themselves under his discipline: amongst whom were divers excellent men of the Armenian nation; to whom the man of God made over his own first habitation, and the neighbouring oratory, in which he directed them to sing the praises of God in their own language. About this time also, the father of the Saint being now dead at Alexandria; his mother Sophia came to visit him; and by his counsel, having entirely renounced this world, passed the short time, that remained of her life, in preparing her soul, by spiritual exercises, for a better place; and made a most holy and happy end, under his direction. The Saint consecrated to the service of God a considerable sum of money, which she bequeathed to him; and built with it two hospitals: the one for the entertainment of passengers, the other for the religious of other communities who came to visit his laura.

Our Saint was united, in a most holy band of friendship, with the great St. Theodosius; and ever joined with him, in promoting the common cause of their common Lord; as well in defending the purity of the Catholick faith, against all the attempts of heresy; as in propagating religious discipline. Their union was so remarkable, that the people of Jerusalem called them the two apostles; and the patriarch Salustius, at the desire of the religious of his district, put under their care all the monasteries round Jerusalem: in such manner that Theodosius had the charge of all that lived in convents (from whence he
had

had the name of Cenobiarcha) and Sabas the charge of all the anchorets and solitaries. But Euthymius was the Saint, whose life St. Sabas particularly chose for the model of his own. By his example, he withdrew himself every year into the most remote parts of the wilderness; and there passed the holy time of lent, till palm-sunday, in perfect solitude, fasting and prayer. In one of these his excursions, he was conducted by divine providence to a steep mountain; on the top of which he found a cavern, and in this cavern a holy anchoret, who had lived there for eight and thirty years, upon nothing but wild herbs, without either seeing, or being seen, all that time, by any man. The edification he received by the heavenly conversation of this man of God, brought Sabas thither again another year, to receive his benediction; but he found him dead, in the posture of one at his prayers; and entered him in his cavern.

In another of these excursions, he came to a hill called Castel, lying at a great distance from all communication with men. This place he pitched upon as proper for a monastery: and after the Easter holidays, he led thither a colony of his disciples; who found in the neighbourhood an old forsaken building, which they turned into a church: and then built themselves cells all round about it. And as the first inhabitants of this holy solitude were men of eminent virtue, and wholly disengaged from all earthly cares and affections; our Lord was pleased, in these beginnings, in a wonderful manner to provide for their subsistence; by giving in charge, in a vision in his sleep, to Marcian the superior of the monasteries of Bethlehem, to furnish them with all necessaries: which he carefully executed.

Whilst these things were doing, the malecontents, of whom we spoke before, were strengthening their faction, by bringing over several others to their

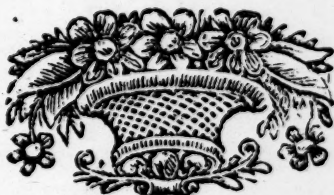
their side ; so that no fewer than forty of the religious entered into a conspiracy against their holy abbot ; resolving to use all the means in their power to get rid of him at any rate. The Saint being advertised of this, chose quietly to withdraw himself from them, rather than to proceed to any measures against them, which might be less agreeable with that meekness, patience and humility, which make up the character of a disciple of Jesus Christ. Wherefore retiring into a desert, not far from the city of Scythopolis ; he took up his abode in a cavern, near the river of Gadar. This cavern happened to be a lion's den : but the beast, finding the Saint there, not only offered him no violence, but quietly yielded up to him the possession of the place. He was not long here before the reputation of his sanctity, which could no where lie concealed, brought many to visit him from the neighbouring cities of Scythopolis and Gadara : amongst whom was a young gentleman named Basil ; who, by an inspiration of heaven, renounced the world for good and all, and came to dwell with Sabas in his cavern. Some thieves, who imagined that Basil, who was rich, had carried off his money with him ; came one night, in hopes of booty, to visit the cavern : but finding nothing there, not even the necessaries of life, they were struck with astonishment ; and retired, not without a great regret for the evil they had purposed to commit ; and a strong apprehension of meeting with some rigorous punishment for it, from the justice of God. This apprehension was greatly encreased, when a little after they had left the cavern, they saw in their way some lions, whose terrible looks, seemed to threaten them with immediate death and destruction. In this extremity of danger, they bethought themselves of the sanctity of Sabas ; and commanded the lions, in the name, and by the virtue of the prayers, of that venerable servant of God, to be gone. When behold they had

no sooner pronounced the name of Sabas, but these furious beasts turned their backs upon them, and ran away. This miracle not only wrought the total conversion of the thieves; but, being noised abroad, brought such multitudes to visit the Saint, as determined him (after recommending to God his disciples there, and leaving to them the cell, he had lately built) to seek some other solitude, where he might attend to his God, with less distraction.

After some time he returned again to his laura; where to his great grief, he found no amendment at all in the disposition of the malecontents: but that whatsoever, he could either say or do, to bring them to a right sense of their duty, made them rather worse than better. Upon this he retired towards Nicopolis, and abode for some time under a tree, in an open field; till the master of the field, admiring his sanctity, built him a cell, which in a short time was changed into a monastery. In the mean while the malecontents applied to Elias, the patriarch of Jerusalem, for another superior; pretending, that Sabas was devoured by a lion. The patriarch gave no credit to the fable: and not long after, Sabas himself coming to Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of the dedication of the church; he obliged him to return to his laura: with an order to the rebels, either to submit to him, or to depart. They chose the latter, and retired towards the torrent of Theon; and repaired some old cells, which they found there; and called this place the *new laura*. But as they were destitute of all things, and no one was willing to assist them: the Saint in his great charity, not only laboured to procure them all necessary provisions; but went himself in person to carry them to them: nor did he cease to ply them with benefits, both for their temporal and spiritual well being; till overcoming their evil with his good, he brought them over to dispositions, more suitable to the sanctity of their state
and

and profession ; and established them in regular discipline, under a holy superior, whom he appointed for them.

It would be endless to descend to all the particulars of the great things, which St. Sabas did, (for the many years, that remained of his life) for the glory of God, for the sanctification of souls, and the propagation of the kingdom of Christ : the spirit of prophesy which he shewed on many occasions ; the great miracles God wrought by him ; and his labours for the public good of the church, and maintaining the purity of the faith ; as well during the reign of Anastasius the Eutychian, as during that of his successors Justin and Justinian. These would suffice for a volume : and therefore are omitted here, as exceeding the bounds of our intended brevity. We shall then only add, that as he had always lived the life of a Saint, so he died the death of a Saint ; on the fifth of December (on which day he is honoured by the church) anno 531, ætatis 94. And that after his death, many miracles were wrought by his intercession.



ST. J O H N, the Silent.

From his disciple Cyrillus, the same who wrote the lives of St. Euthymius, and St. Sabas.

J O H N, from his great affection to silence, surnamed *Silentiarius*, or the *Silent*, was born in the lesser Armenia, of parents illustrious, according to the world, (anno 453) who being good Christians, gave him a Christian education. At the age of eighteen he left the world; and employed that part of the estate, which fell to him, by the death of his father and mother, in building a church in honour of the blessed Virgin; together with a monastery, into which he retired, with ten other persons, who were desirous like him, to think of nothing else but the salvation of their souls. The life that he here led, in perfect purity of soul and body, joined with a most profound humility; and the heavenly prudence, with which he conducted the religious committed to his charge, recommended him first to the priestly character; and not long after, upon the death of the bishop of Colonia, determined the metropolitan, (the archbishop of Sebaste) to consecrate no other than him, to fill up this vacancy. In order to this, he sent for John, as if it were upon some other occasion; and when he had him with him, in spite of all his remonstrances, he ordained him bishop. He was then thirty eight years of age: and for ten years, discharged himself, in a most edifying manner, of all the duties of the episcopal ministry; practising all the while the same religious exercises as he had been accustomed to in his monastery.

At the latter end of this time, finding his church and his clergy very much oppressed, by the governour of the province (who was his brother-in-law) and that all his remonstrances only served to make him
 worse;

worse ; he took a journey to Constantinople, to seek a remedy for these evils. Here with the help of the patriarch Euphemius, he settled the affairs of his diocese, in the best manner he could ; and then following a divine inspiration, and resolving totally to withdraw himself from the world ; without acquainting any one with his design, he privately got on board a ship, and went away to Jerusalem. Here he took up his lodging in a hospital, where there was a chappel of St. George the martyr : and for the time he remained there, was continually praying with many tears, that God would direct him to a proper place ; where he might attend to nothing else but to the working out his own salvation. As he was passing one night in prayer, to this effect, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he perceived a light, in form of a cross, coming towards him ; and heard a voice that said to him : ‘ if thou desirest to save thy soul, follow this light.’ He immediately obeyed ; and going out, by following this heavenly light, he was conducted to the great laura of St. Sabas : where at that time there were one hundred and fifty solitaries ; living in a very great want of all temporal things, but rich in the treasures of divine grace.

The holy abbot received this new comer, without knowing who he was ; and recommended him to the procurator of the community : under whom he was employed for some time in divers offices, for the service of the other religious ; fetching water for them, preparing their victuals, carrying stones for the building, which they had at that time in hand ; dressing and carrying the workmen their dinners, at the distance of above a mile from his lodgings ; entertaining the strangers that came ; and in a word, doing all that any of the monks desired of him ; with such humility, readiness and chearfulness, as made him both admired, and loved by them all.

After this, St. Sabas appointed him a little cell, in which for the space of three years he lived in silence; taking no manner of nourishment for five days of the week; and only coming out to the church on saturdays and sundays; where he was always the first, and the last; and sung there the psalms of the divine office, with that respectful awe, with that modest gravity, and with that fervent piety, which edified all that saw him: he assisted also there at the unbloody sacrifice and sacrament of the altar, with so great a compunction and devotion, that he could not refrain from shedding an abundance of tears, during the time of the celebrating those divine mysteries.

After these three years of silence, St. Sabas gave him the charge of procurator of the Laura; to the great advantage of the whole community: God giving his blessing to his servant, and assisting him in all things. And now his time of exercising this office being expired; the holy abbot, seeing him so accomplished in all virtue, took him with him to Jerusalem; and desired the patriarch (St. Elias, the successor of Salustius, and formerly disciple of St Euthymius) to impose his hands upon him, and to ordain him priest. The servant of God, on this occasion, desired he might be first allowed to speak to the patriarch in private; and having obtained of him a promise of secrecy, he told him; that he had been a bishop; but that the multitude of his sins had determined him to quit his see, and to flee into the desert, in order to bewail his sins, and obtain the divine mercy; and in the mean time, as long as he was strong and robust, to labour all he could to assist and comfort those good religious, to whom God had associated him. The patriarch was astonished at the hearing of this; and calling for St. Sabas, said to him: ' This monk has discovered to me in private
' some particulars, which will not allow me to or-
' dain

' dain him priest. Take him therefore back with
 ' you, and let him live in silence; and let no one
 ' disturb him.' St. Sabas, being thus disappointed,
 and withal very much concerned, thro the apprehension he had, lest some great evil might have been discovered by the patriarch, which had hindred him from admitting his disciple to holy orders; betook himself to his prayers, and ceased not to importune our Lord, to let him know, whether John was indeed, as he had thought, a vessel of sanctification, and worthy of the priestly function, or no? At length an Angel appearing to him, (after he had spent the whole night in prayer) told him, that John was indeed *a vessel of election*: but being already a bishop, could not be ordained priest. St. Sabas, who was often favoured with the like visions, went immediately to St. John's cell; and embracing him said. ' I find, father, that you have hidden from
 ' me the grace you have received from God: but he
 ' has been pleased to reveal it to me. You mortify
 ' me exceedingly, said John, by speaking thus to me.
 ' I was in hopes this secret would not have been
 ' known by any man: but now I see I must leave
 ' this country.' Sabas desired him to be easy; and made him a solemn promise, that he would tell no man. Upon which he was content to continue with him; yet so as to keep close in his cell: where he spent four years more in perfect solitude and silence; till the insolence of the monks having driven St. Sabas away from the Laura, John would stay no longer there; nor have any communication with the rebels: but retired to the desert of Ruban; where he found a cavern, in which he passed nine years, conversing with God alone, and living upon what wild herbs or roots he could find in the wilderness.

Whilst he was in this solitude, one of the religious came to visit him, and staid a while with him: but being quickly wearied with so austere a kind of life,

and so strict a retirement, he proposed to him, that they should return together to the Laura; to celebrate with the brethren the approaching feast of Easter; and not to continue where they were, to starve in that barren desert. The Saint, who could not think of returning to the Laura, as long as Sabas was not there; exhorted the brother to a confidence in divine providence: which, as heretofore it had fed six hundred thousand men, for the space of forty years in the wilderness, could with all ease abundantly provide for them two. But his exhortation made no impression on the mind of his companion: who presently took his leave of him, and departed. He was scarce gone, when an unknown person came to the cavern of the Saint, driving an ass, laden with all sorts of provisions; which he bestowed upon the servant of God: whose faith his divine majesty was pleased to reward in this wonderful manner. Whilst the other, instead of going back to the Laura, lost his way in the wilderness; and after wandering about for three days, being now quite exhausted and famished, returned to the Saint; and seeing all the good things that God had sent him, acknowledged his own error, and asked pardon for it.

Whilst St. John was living in this desert, the Saracens made an in-road upon the borders of the empire, on the side of Palestine; and committed great outrages. On this occasion the Saint was pressed by the monks of the Laura, to come and shelter himself amongst them; where he should be more remote from the danger of the enemy's parties, and protected by the Roman soldiers. But he, who had found by experience, how sweet it was to converse alone with his God, in that wilderness; chose rather to remain where he was: putting his whole trust in him, who has given his Angels a charge over his servants, to guard them in all their ways. And his divine goodness was pleased to shew his approbation, of this
entire

entire confidence, which his servant placed in him ; by sending him , as my author learnt from the Saint's own mouth , a great lion to be his visible guard. At the first sight of the beast, the man of God was struck with some fear ; but he quickly recovered himself, and found that the creature meant him no harm, but carefully attended him day and night, and suffered no enemy to come near his cavern.

At the end of the nine years , St. Sabas visited him , and brought him back with him to the Laura. Where he lived for many years shut up in his cell : no one, but the holy abbot, knowing all this while of his being a bishop : till God was pleased it should be discovered, and made known to the whole community ; by the means of Atherius, an Asiatick prelate, who having made a pilgrimage of devotion to Jerusalem, was directed from heaven, to go and visit our Saint, in the Laura of St. Sabas : and there acquainted the religious with the treasure they possessed in him ; and with all the particulars of his former life. John was now seventy years of age : and this same year, God was pleased to take St. Sabas to himself. Our Saint was sensibly touched with the loss of his holy father : the more because being shut up in his cell, he had not been present at his death. When behold St. Sabas appeared to him in a dream, bidding him not to be afflicted at his death: for though they were now separated in body, they were still united in spirit. John desired he would pray to God for him ; that he would be pleased to take him also out of this miserable world. But Sabas told him, that could not be as yet : because his longer stay in the world was necessary to support the brethren, under the grievous conflicts and temptations, which they were like to be exposed to, from the enemies of their faith.

Twenty years after this, when the Saint was now four-score and ten years old, my author, who had been received, when a child, by St. Sabas, into the number of his disciples, was directed by his pious mother to St. John, in order to be guided in all things, by his counsels, for the welfare of his soul. The Saint told him, if he desired to save his soul, he would advise him to enter into the monastery of St. Euthymius. But he being then young and giddy, neglected the advice, and chose rather to go towards the Jordan, to dwell in some of the religious houses in that part of the country. Here being in the Laura, called the Reedfield, he was taken violently ill; being unaccustomed to the yoke of religious discipline; and suffered at the same time a great anguish of mind, as well as bodily pain: when behold the Saint appeared to him in a dream, and said to him: 'See how you are now chastized, because you would not be advised by me. But rise up, and go to Jericho, and there you shall find in the hospital of the abbot Euthymius, a very ancient religious man: follow him into the monastery, into which he shall conduct you, and there you shall find the salvation of your soul.' He awaked upon this, and found himself perfectly cured: and presently getting up, after receiving the blessed sacrament, and taking some nourishment, he walked the same day to Jericho. From hence he went to the monastery of St. Euthymius: and from that time always applied to our Saint, for his spiritual direction.

This gave him an opportunity, of being an eyewitness of the wonders, God wrought by his Saint. As when in his presence, one, whose name was George, brought his son, that was grievously tormented with an evil spirit; and left him before the window of his cell (for no one ever came within the door) who was immediately delivered; upon the Saint's praying for him, and anointing him with the oil of the holy cross.

cross. But the miracles wrought by him, for the cure of souls, were the most remarkable. The abbot Eustatius applied one day to the Saint, upon occasion of a most violent and obstinate temptation of blasphemous thoughts, desiring him to pray for him. The servant of God did so: and then turning to him, he said: 'God be praised, my son, you will never be troubled with the like thoughts any more.' As in effect he never was. This my author learnt from Eustatius himself.

A lady of Constantinople, named Basilissa, who was deaconness of the great church there, having taken a journey to the holy land; in the company of a kinsman of hers, who though otherwise vertuous and religious, was infected with the errors of Eutyches; hearing of the wonderful graces bestowed upon our Saint; had a great desire to see him, and to speak to him. But being informed, that no woman was allowed to come within the inclosure of the Laura; she sent to Theodore, his disciple, and begged of him to take her cousin along with him to the Saint; in hopes that by his blessing and prayers, he might be reclaimed from his errors, and converted. Theodore took the young man with him, and knockt at the Saint's window, according to his custom: which when he had opened, they both of them knelt down, and craved his blessing. The man of God told his disciple, that as for his part, he gave him his benediction: but that he could not do as much for his companion, because by schism and heresy, he was an alien from the catholick church of God. The young man, astonished to hear him speak in this manner of the state of his soul, which he could not know but by divine revelation; was, by an evident miracle of grace, perfectly converted upon the spot; and renouncing his heresy, after a competent preparation, was admitted by the Saint to the holy communion. The lady, overjoyed at his conversion, conceived a still greater

greater desire of seeing the Saint, and of treating with him about the state of her soul. Infomuch that she had formed a design, of putting on man's cloaths, that so she might have access to him. But the Saint, knowing by revelation her design, sent to her to lay aside that useles scheme: for that he would not be seen by her, in that manner. But if she would stay where she was, she should see him in her sleep; and then might put what questions she pleased to him. The following night, or at least not long after, the Saint appeared to her, in a dream, and said to her. ' God ' hath sent me to you: you may now propose to me ' all that you want to know.' She then declared to him all, that she had in her mind; and she received from him a full satisfaction in every particular. For which she returned great thanks to God. All this, says my author, I can assure to be very true: for I had it from her own mouth.

And here my author concludes his account of our Saint, who was, at the time of his writing, actually living: doubting not, as he says, but that others would deliver in a more ample manner to posterity, the great things that God had wrought by him; as well as his many labours and sufferings, in defence of the faith of the church. The Saint was at that time one hundred and four years old: and though weak in body, yet perfect in all the faculties of his soul; and by a chearful countenance, ever shewed forth the joy of his heart, and the purity of his conscience. How long he lived after this, or in what year he departed to our Lord, I have not found. But his name stands recorded among the Saints, in the Roman martyrology, on the thirteenth of May.

ST. JOHN CLIMACUS.

From Daniel monk of Raithu, his cotemporary, and from his own writings.

J O H N, furnamed *Climacus*, from his excellent book entitled *Climax*, that is the *Scale* or *ladder* of Christian and religious perfection, was born about the year 525. as it is thought, in some part of Palestine. After an innocent education at home, in the exercises of Christian piety, joined with the study of human sciences; when he had attained to the age of sixteen, he took a happy resolution to leave the world, and all the things in the world, in order to find the treasure of evangelical perfection, in the field of religious discipline. The place he pitched upon for his retirement, in which he might spend the remaining days of his mortality, was mount Sina; where the Lord heretofore gave his law to Moses; and which from the time, that St. Antony and St. Hilarion began to propagate the monastick institute, had always been peopled with holy solitaries. Some of these lived as hermites, in lonesome cells; others in the great monastery, on the top of the mountain; which was at this time one of the most celebrated in the church of God. But John took a middle way; and declining the multitude of the convent, as exposing him to more distractions; and yet not venturing, because he was young and unexperienced, to live quite by himself, as an anchorit; he put himself under the discipline of a holy man, who had his cell on the side of the mountain, whose name was Martyrius; and lived with him, for nineteen years, in the exercises of an humble and faithful obedience; in such manner as that he seemed from his very first entring upon this course of life, to have left his own will behind him; and notwithstanding his

his great wit and learning, (which is so apt to puff men up) to judge of nothing by his own lights, and to do nothing by his own choice; but to regulate himself in all things, by an humble dependance on the conduct and direction of his superior, as the surest way, for him to be conducted and directed by God himself.

After four years probation, he made his solemn profession, by which he eternally dedicated himself to God. At which time a holy abbot, who was present, foretold that this young religious man would be, one day, one of the greatest lights of the church of God. From the time of his profession, John continued still to live, with the same simplicity and humility, under the direction of Martyrius; making all the time a continual progress, both in virtue, and in the knowledge of the holy scriptures; on which he meditated day and night. Martyrius some times took him along with him, to visit the Saints, who dwelt in that neighbourhood. One day he brought him to a servant of God, whose name was Anastasius: who fixing his eyes upon him, told Martyrius that his disciple would be one day abbot of mount Sina. Now this was looked upon in those days, as one of the highest promotions, in the whole monastick order; and a dignity, to which none were raised but such as were most eminent in sanctity; no others being thought proper to be fathers and superiors of so many Saints, as then inhabited that holy mountain. Another time they went together to visit John, surnamed the Sabaite, because he had been a disciple of St. Sabas. This holy man, according to the custom of the solitaries, washed the feet of his guests; beginning with the disciple. For which being asked the reason, he said, he did not know, who that young man was: but he believed he saw in him an abbot of mount Sina.

At

At the end of nineteen years, our Lord took Martyrius to himself : and then our Saint, by the counsel of George the Arsilaites, an eminent servant of God, undertook an anachoreticall life, in a cell by himself, at the foot of the mountain, at the distance of five miles from the church : to which nevertheless he repaired on all saturdays and sundays, to join with all the rest of the religious, in the divine office, and in assisting at the sacred mysteries, and receiving the blessed sacrament. In this hermitage he continued for forty years, practising in the highest degree of perfection, those three principal virtues of a solitary life, which he has so much recommended in his writings : viz. a total disengagement of his thoughts, and of his heart, from all temporal things : a continual watchfulness ; and a continual prayer : which consisted, as we learn from his own doctrine (Grad. 27) in having God always for his object ; and his divine will for his rule, in all his exercises, in all his words, in all his thoughts, and in every motion and step that he took ; and in doing nothing but in the presence of God ; and with an internal fervour of spirit. This gift of continual prayer was accompanied with the gift of tears, which he frequently poured forth in private before our Lord, bewailing his sins, with the deepest compunction of heart. Nor did his frequent application to the reading of holy writ, and of the writings of the Saints, interrupt his prayer, or his tears : but rather served as a fuel to that inward fire of divine love, which produced both the one and the other. Nor did the knowledge he here acquired, nor the particular lights, which the Spirit of God imparted to him, for the instruction and conduct of others, prejudice in the least his humility, or make him think he was left upon earth, for any thing else, but to bewail his sins in solitude, and to do penance for them.

Many

Many, as well religious, as seculars, came from time to time to consult him, about the concerns of their souls: to whom, with great candour and simplicity, he communicated the lights, which God gave him. A solitary, whose name was Moses, not content with only coming to consult him, prevailed with him, by the intercession of the ancients of mount Sina, to receive him in quality of his disciple. This Moses was one day sent by the Saint, to fetch earth from a place at some distance, for the use of their little garden. The fatigue of the work, and the heat of the sun, obliged him, towards noonday, to go and rest himself on the side of a bank, under the shadow of a rock, or great stone, that hung over his head. Here laying himself down he fell fast asleep. In the mean time the Saint, who had been praying in his cell, happened also to fall into a slumber; in which there appeared to him a venerable person, that said: 'Dost thou sleep, John, without any concern: get up, for Moses is upon the brink of danger.' He immediately awaked upon this admonition, and betook himself to his prayers, to beg a deliverance for his disciple. And whilst he was praying for him, the divine goodness was pleased that Moses also should hear, as he thought, in his sleep, the voice of his master, calling upon him to get up with all speed: upon which he presently started up in a fright, and ran away from the bank; and within less than a minute, the great stone, under which he had been sleeping, fell down; so that if he had remained there one minute longer, he must have been crushed to death.

The common enemy of the good of souls, seeing with an envious eye, the great advantages that many reaped from the instructions, and spiritual discourses, which the Saint made to them, that visited him; stirred up the jealousy of certain persons; who pretended to take scandal, at his speaking too much; and

and said that he was a babler, who gave himself airs, and only loved to hear himself talk. The Saint, who sought not his own glory, but that of God, and who had no opinion at all of his own performances, but had only yielded to speak, thro' the importunity of his brethren, and by fraternal charity ; far from justifying or excusing himself, or even taking in evil part what they said of him ; believing they had only meant to give him a charitable admonition, and a fraternal correction ; was resolved to comply with it : and in consequence of it, condemned himself to an inviolable silence ; which he kept for a whole twelvemonth : till those very men, overcome with his wonderful humility and modesty, and sensible of the detriment they had done to the publick, by depriving them of the wholesom instructions and directions of the man of God, joined with all the rest of the brethren, in begging of him to resume his former practice.

And now the Saint had lived forty years an anchorit in his cell, when all the religious of mount Sina, with one accord, chose him for their abbot ; and in spite of all his resistance, obliged him to quit his hermitage, and to come and be the conductor, and general superior of them all. Thus this great light was set upon the candlestick, and from thence cast his bright rays far and near, to enlighten the whole world. The lustre of his sanctity, reached even as far as Rome, from whence that most holy pope, St. Gregory the great, sent letters to him, testifying the great esteem he had of his eminent virtue. And now it was that John the abbot of Raithu (a famous monastery on the confines of Egypt) obtained of our Saint, to commit also to writing, the great lights he had received from God, for directing and conducting souls to the very top of the mountain of religious perfection. This he has happily executed, in his excellent book, entitled *Climax*, or the *Ladder*, of thirty steps, or degrees, of Christian virtues, by which the soul mounts

up to the heavenly paradise. From this work it appears, that the Saint, before the composing of it, had made a visit to a famous monastery in Egypt (believed to have been of the order, or congregation, of St. Pachomius) of which he makes frequent mention; with great elogium, as well of the abbot, as of divers of the monks by name. Here he continued a considerable time; and with the leave of the superior, he went also to see the monastery, or rather prison, of the penitents (which was about a mile off from the abbey) and remained in it thirty days. The wonders of divine grace, which he discovered there, in the whole demeanour of these happy penitents, he has set down at large in his fifth step, or degree of his Ladder, which is that of *penitence*: of which, for a spur to penitent sinners, we shall here give an abstract.

‘ Being come, saith he, into this monastery of the penitents, I beheld things, which the eye of the slothful has never seen; the ear of the negligent has never heard; and which have never entered into the heart of the sluggard: things and words, capable of doing violence, if I may say so, to the Almighty.—I saw some of these penitents standing whole nights upright, without allowing themselves any sleep, or rest at all.—Others, in a pitiful manner, looking up towards heaven, and calling for help from thence, with groans, and sighs, and prayers. Others I saw, who in their prayer, had their hands bound behind them, like criminals, and who bowing down their pale countenances towards the ground, declared aloud that they were unworthy to lift up their eyes to heaven; and that they durst not presume to speak to God, &c. I saw some sitting on the floor, covered with haircloth and ashes, hiding their faces between their knees, and striking their foreheads against the earth; others beating their breasts, with inexpressible contrition

‘ of

of heart. Some of these watered the ground about
 them with their tears ; others grievously lamented
 that they could not weep : several of them mourn-
 ed, with a lowd cry, over their own souls, as we
 mourn over the dead corpse of a dear friend :
 others there were, who ready to roar for grief,
 eagerly strove to stifle the noise of their complaints,
 till being no longer able to repress them, they
 were forced to let them break forth with greater
 violence. Others appeared so astonished, that one
 would have taken them for statues of brass ; so
 insensible of all things, had the excess of their
 sorrow rendred them. Their heart was plunged
 in an abyss of humility ; and their scorching grief,
 had dried up all their tears, &c. There might one
 have seen the words of David fulfilled in fact, by
 these holy penitents, *I am become miserable, and am
 bowed down even to the end : I walked sorrowful all
 the day long. I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly.*
 And again, *I am smitten as grass, and my heart is
 withered, because I forgot to eat my bread.—For I did
 eat ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weep-
 ing.* No other words were heard amongst them,
 but such as these : wo, wo, to me a miserable sin-
 ner : 'tis with justice, O Lord, 'tis with justice :
 spare us, O Lord, spare us : have mercy on us.—
 Some of them afflicted themselves, by standing
 parching in the sun's most violent heat : others on
 the contrary, exposed themselves to suffer no less
 from the extremity of the cold. Some taking a
 small quantity of water, in the violence of their
 thirst, contented themselves with only tasting of
 it : and others, after eating a little morsel of bread,
 cast the rest away, saying they were not worthy
 to eat the food of men, since they had acted more
 like irrational creatures, than men. There was no
 room here for laughter : none for idle talk ; none

‘ for resentment, or anger, or contradiction: none
 ‘ for mirth, or for the care of the body, or good
 ‘ cheer, or the pleasures of eating or drinking: none
 ‘ for the least smoak of vain-glory: no earthly cares
 ‘ distracted them: they knew not what it was to
 ‘ judge, or condemn any man, but themselves. Their
 ‘ whole employment was to cry day and night to
 ‘ our Lord: and no voice was heard in this com-
 ‘ pany but that of prayer. There were some of
 ‘ them, who beating their breasts with all their
 ‘ might, as if they were standing and knocking at
 ‘ the gate of heaven, said to the Lord: O open to
 ‘ us, by thy mercy, open to us the gate, which we
 ‘ have shut against ourselves by our sins. Another
 ‘ cried out: *Shew us only thy face, O Lord, and we*
 ‘ *shall be saved.* Another said, shew thyself, O Lord,
 ‘ to thy poor suppliants, that sit in darkness, and
 ‘ in the shadow of death, &c. They had always
 ‘ the hour of their death present before their eyes:
 ‘ and would be saying, O what shall our end be?
 ‘ What sentence shall then be pronounced upon us?
 ‘ Will God revoke the just judgment we have de-
 ‘ served? Has our prayer been able to make its
 ‘ way before the presence of the Lord? Has it been
 ‘ regarded, coming from such unclean hearts and lips
 ‘ as ours? Has some part at least of our sins been blot-
 ‘ ted out? For as they are very great, they stand in need
 ‘ of very many penitential labours and sorrows, to be
 ‘ wholly effaced. Who can tell, whether even our
 ‘ good Angels are near us, to present our prayers;
 ‘ or whether the stench of our sins has not driven
 ‘ them away? &c. Some replied to these interro-
 ‘ gations: who knows, brethren (as the Ninivites
 ‘ said heretofore) but that our Lord may pardon
 ‘ us, and deliver us from that dreadful penance of
 ‘ the world to come? Let us neglect nothing that
 ‘ lies in us: let us continue to knock at the door
 ‘ of

' of his mercy, even till the end of our life : per-
 ' haps he will yield to our importunity, and per-
 ' severance ; for he is good and merciful. Let us
 ' run, brethren, let us run, for we have need to run,
 ' and to run with all our speed, that we may reco-
 ' ver what we have lost. Let us run, and not spare
 ' this filthy flesh : let us make it suffer in time ;
 ' because it has exposed us to the danger of suf-
 ' fering for eternity. Thus said these holy crimi-
 ' nals, and they made good what they said. Their
 ' knees were hardened with continual prayer : their
 ' eyes appeared sunk into their heads : the hair
 ' of their eye-lids was fallen away, with their con-
 ' tinual weeping : their cheeks were rivelled, and
 ' as it were, parcht with the scalding of their tears :
 ' their breasts bruised with blows, &c.

The Saint adds a great deal more, with regard
 to the sentiments and dispositions of these holy
 penitents ; and all that he saw and heard amongst
 them, during his stay there. And then concludes
 his narration in this manner. ' After I had re-
 ' mained thirty days in this prison, I returned to
 ' the great monastery, to that holy man, the ab-
 ' bot : who seeing me quite altered, and like a
 ' man wholly astonished ; comprehending the cause
 ' of my amazement, said to me : How is it, fa-
 ' ther John ? Have you seen the labours and
 ' conflicts of our penitents ? Yes, said I, father,
 ' I have both seen, and admired them : and I
 ' cannot but esteem them more happy, who mourn
 ' in this manner, after falling into sin ; than those
 ' who have not fallen, and therefore bewail not
 ' themselves. Because it seems to me that their
 ' fall has been an occasion to them of a most happy,
 ' and most secure rising up again.

Our Saint after publishing this book, did not
 continue long in his station of abbot ; but exchanged

it for his beloved solitude ; returning into the defart, to prepare himself for eternity. He departed to our Lord, in an advanced age, about the Year 605 : and his name is enregistred amongst the saints, in the Roman martyrology, on the thirtieth of March.



S T. J O H N the Almoner.

From his life written by Leontius, his cotemporary, bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus.

THIS Saint, whose life has been commonly published with those of the fathers of the desert (though it does not appear, that he ever lived in the desert) was born in Cyprus, about the year 552: his father, Epiphanius, being at that time governour of the island. He was brought up from his childhood in Christian piety; and amongst other virtues, he was always in a particular manner addicted to alms-deeds, and to the works of mercy, and charity to the poor: from whence the surname of *the almoner* or *alms-giver*, has stuck to him ever since. He was confirmed in the love and practice of this virtue, by a vision which he had in his youth; which he himself afterwards related, in this manner. ‘ When
‘ I was, said he, no more than fifteen years old;
‘ and was living in the isle of Cyprus; I saw one
‘ night in a dream, a young virgin, crowned with
‘ olive, of an incomparable beauty, and more bright
‘ than the sun: who standing by my bed, struck me
‘ on the side, and awaked me. After I was awaked,
‘ I still perceived her standing there; and supposed
‘ her to be a woman. Wherefore making the sign
‘ of the cross, I asked her who she was, and how she
‘ had the boldness to come thus to my bed side, when I
‘ was asleep? She answered me, with a sweet and smiling
‘ countenance: I am the eldest daughter of the great
‘ King: take me for thy friend, and I will conduct
‘ thee into his presence. For no one has so much
‘ power and interest, with that great Monarch, as I
‘ have: it was I that even brought him down from
‘ heaven to the earth, and made him to become
‘ man, in order to save men. Having said these

' words she disappeared. As soon as I recovered
 ' myself, I began to think, that this heavenly beauty
 ' represented mercy, compassion for the afflicted,
 ' and alms-deeds : because it was indeed the mercy,
 ' compassion, and goodness of God towards us men,
 ' that made him come down from heaven, to cloth
 ' himself with our humanity. I got up, and dressed
 ' myself immediately, without awaking any of my
 ' people, and at the first dawning of the day, I went
 ' out to the church. In my way, I met with a poor
 ' man, all trembling with cold ; and, to make as it
 ' were an experiment of the truth of the vision, I
 ' put off my cloak, and gave it him. Presently
 ' after, when I had not yet reached the church door,
 ' a stranger clothed in white, came up to me, and
 ' put a purse into my hands, in which were a hun-
 ' dred pieces of money, saying : Take this, my bro-
 ' ther, and distribute it as you shall see fitting.
 ' The joy, together with the surprize I was in, made
 ' me receive the purse without demur : but upon
 ' reflection, I turned back, to follow the person, and
 ' to return him the money, as having no want or occa-
 ' sion for it : but I could see no more of him. From
 ' that day, I often gave alms to my brethren the
 ' poor ; and I said within myself : now I shall see,
 ' if Jesus Christ, according to his promise in the
 ' Gospel, will return me a hundred fold : in which
 ' I did very ill, in tempting God ; and had after-
 ' wards a great scruple for it : yet I still received
 ' from him, at sundry times, and in divers manners,
 ' all the satisfaction I could desire.' So far the Saint,
 speaking of his younger days.

St. John had given great examples of all virtues,
 more especially of an unbounded charity, in a secu-
 lar life, till he was about fifty-four years of age :
 when the great reputation of his sanctity, which was
 spread far and near, so far recommended him to the
 church of Alexandria, that upon the death of their
 patriarch

patriarch (Theodore) they pitched upon him to fill up that vacancy. The emperour Heraclius using also all his interest, to overcome the repugnance the Saint had to this promotion : of which he thought himself infinitely unworthy. As soon as he arrived at Alexandria, he sent for the officers of the church, and the archdeacon ; and said to them : ‘ It would not be ‘ just, O, my brethren, if we should begin with ‘ any other care or concern, before that which we ‘ owe to Jesus Christ. Wherefore be pleased to go ‘ through the city, and let me have an exact list ‘ of all my masters.’ And as they seemed not to know, who they were, whom he called his masters ; he explained himself to them, and told them he meant the poor ; whom he considered as his lords and masters ; and as his assistants also, who by their prayers, were to help him to heaven. The list of the poor, which they brought in, was found to amount, in that great and populous city, to upwards of seven thousand, five hundred : yet notwithstanding their great number, the Saint gave orders that a daily allowance of all necessaries should be made to every one of them, out of his revenue.

After his consecration, he immediately applied himself, with all diligence and fervour, to execute, with the utmost perfection, every branch of his pastoral charge ; and as a true father of his people to procure them whatever was either for their spiritual or corporal welfare. He began, by putting an effectual stop to the frauds and injustices, committed in trade ; particularly by false weights and measures ; which, said he, God abhors, as we learn from his divine word. And as he was informed, that they who had the administration of the temporalities of his church, were often biassed by presents, which were made them ; so as to be partial in the discharge of their office : he sent for them, and after appointing them a larger salary ; strictly forbid them to receive any presents

presents from any person whatsoever; forasmuch, said he, as a fire shall consume the houses of them that take bribes. He was also informed, that many, who desired to apply to him, with their suits and complaints, when labouring under injuries and oppressions, were hindered, or intimidated by his secretaries and other officers: which he considered as a great evil. To remedy this, he ordered a chair to be placed before the great church, with a bench on each side of it: where on every Wednesday and Saturday, he attended for several hours, to give audience to all that pleased to come to him; to grant all that was just and right; and to give in charge to a proper officer to see that what he ordered should be presently executed. Upon which occasion he used to say: ‘ If we, who are but poor mortals, are allowed
 ‘ at every hour, to go into the house of God, to address our supplications to him, and to lay before
 ‘ him all our wants: though his Majesty is incomprehensible, and infinitely elevated above all created beings: if we are earnest with him to hear our
 ‘ prayers, and to make haste to help us: how ready
 ‘ ought we to be to hear the petitions, and to satisfy
 ‘ the demands of them that are our fellow servants: remembering that saying of our Lord Jesus, *with
 ‘ what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you
 ‘ again?* Matt. vii. 3.’

On these occasions, it was the custom of our Saint, who never loved to be idle, to take with him the holy Scriptures; and to employ himself (whilst he was there waiting, in order to give audience to such as should apply to him) either in reading the word of God, or in spiritual conferences, with some servants of God. One day he had staid there till near noon, without being applied to by any one person. Upon which he withdrew, with tears in his eyes: saying that no one of his people had favoured him that day, by giving him any opportunity of offering something
 to

to Jesus Christ, in order to cancel his own innumerable sins. Sophronius a great servant of God, who was with him, told him he ought rather to rejoice, to see that God had made him his instrument, for to establish so good a harmony, and so perfect a peace amongst the sheep committed to his charge, that there was not one amongst them, that had any difference or contestation with his neighbour. For this is indeed, said he, making men like to Angels.

This same Sophronius, and John his companion, men equally eminent both for their wisdom, and their sanctity, were sent by divine providence to the assistance of our Saint. He made use of them upon all occasions as his counsellors and directors: and he obeyed them with as much submission as if they had been his fathers. He esteemed them, and loved them the more, because of the great talent they had, in bringing back to God innumerable souls, who had been unhappily deluded by the Eutychian heresy; which had greatly prevailed all over Egypt, even amongst many of the religious. But by the means of these holy men, the Saint had the comfort of seeing in his days, not only many private houses and families, but also many churches and monasteries delivered out of the jaws of the infernal wolf, and brought home to the true fold of Christ, the Catholick church. For his part, he ever inculcated to all his people, to keep off from all communion in spirituals, with any of them that were separated, by heresy, from the communion of the church; and not so much as to enter into their churches, or meeting houses; much less to join with them in prayer: no not even though any one's unhappy circumstances should confine him, all his life time, to a place, where he could never see a catholick priest, or receive any of the holy sacraments. For as, said he, the laws of God and man forbid that any one, who has a wife living, should take another woman; how

how far off soever, or for how long a time soever, she may be separated from him. So he, who has been espoused to Christ in the Catholick church, cannot without the crime of a spiritual adultery, upon any pretext whatsoever, engage himself in the communion of hereticks.

Besides the assistance our Saint received in the discharge of his pastoral office, from those two great men : being also desirous of making himself partaker in the prayers and merits of the holy solitaries (for whose manner of life, though he had never been a solitary himself, he had ever a great esteem) he assembled together a number of saint-like anchorets, out of the desarts ; whom he distributed into two bands, building cells for them in two chappels, which he had erected at his own charges ; the one dedicated to the ever blessed Virgin, the other to St. John ; and furnishing them with all necessaries, out of his own farms : to the end, as he told them, that whilst he, under God, took upon himself the care of providing for their corporal sustenance, they on their part should take to heart the providing for the spiritual necessities of his soul ; especially by offering up to God in his behalf their evening and midnight devotions. These foundations of the Saint, were of great edification to the faithful of Alexandria ; many of whom, in different parts of the city, were excited by the example of these holy men, to pass whole nights in singing the praises of God.

It would be endless to mark down the particulars of all the great things, which our Saint did, during the ten years of his episcopal administration, as well for the greater glory of God, as for the sanctification and salvation of the souls committed to his charge : together with the many wonderful examples he gave of humility, meekness, patience, charity for all, even his enemies, and other Gospel virtues. But as his distinguishing character was the virtue of
mercy,

mercy, and charity, to the poor and distressed, and
 an unbounded liberality in point of alms-deeds : we
 must not omit some extraordinary instances of his
 performances in this kind. In his time Chosroes,
 king of Persia, laid waste Syria, and other parts of the
 eastern empire, and carried off a great number of
 Christians into captivity and slavery. Such as could
 escape his hands, made the best of their way to
 Alexandria, and presented themselves, in great mul-
 titudes, to the man of God, as the known refuge of
 all the distressed. He received them all with open
 arms : and as many of them as were sick or wounded,
 he placed in hospitals, or other lodgings, where they
 were all entertained at his charges, as long as they
 themselves pleased to stay ; and all care was taken of
 them. And as to the rest, who were innumerable,
 he ordered his almoners, to give to all that asked
 of them one piece of silver to every man, and two
 pieces of silver to every woman or girl, in considera-
 tion of the weakness of their sex. His almoners
 seeing the great numbers of those that applied for re-
 lief, and that amongst these some were richly clad,
 made a scruple of giving to them, and came to speak
 to the Saint on the subject. But he was highly dis-
 pleased, that they had not complied, to the letter,
 with those words of our Lord, Luke vi. 30. *Give
 to everyone that asketh you* ; and he desired, they would
 not be inquisitive, for the future, into the circumstan-
 ces of those, who came to ask alms ; but would dis-
 tribute that which belonged to Christ, with a boun-
 tiful hand according to the will, and commandment
 of Christ. ‘ But if, said he, your little faith makes
 ‘ you apprehend, lest my income should not be
 ‘ sufficient, to furnish wherewithal to give to such
 ‘ great numbers : I will by no means be a partner in
 ‘ your unbelief. And seeing it has pleased God to
 ‘ make me, tho’ most unworthy, the dispenser of
 ‘ his goods ; if all the men in the world were to
 ‘ come

‘ come to Alexandria, to beg alms ; I would give to
‘ them all ; with an entire confidence, that they
‘ would never be able to exhaust his immense stores,
‘ nor those of the church.’

Whilst this great multitude of people was at Alexandria, one of these strangers, (in order to make a trial of the Saint’s extream charity, and compassion for the distressed) presented himself to him, in a ragged garment, one day, when he was going to the hospital, to visit the sick (as he constantly did twice or thrice in the week) and begged of him, to have pity on a poor captive, and order him some relief. The Saint forthwith ordered his almoner, to give him six pieces of silver. He had no sooner received this alms, but going, and changing his dress, he met the Saint again in another street, and casting himself at his feet, told him he was a poor man in very great distress ; and begged his assistance. The holy prelate then bid his almoner give him six pieces of gold : notwithstanding that this officer whispered in his ear, and told him that it was the very same person, whom he had relieved a little before. He came again the third time, imploring still the charity of the man of God : and then the almoner signified to him again, that it was the same person : but the Saint then bid him give him twelve pieces of gold : for possibly, said he, this may be Jesus Christ my Saviour, who is come on purpose to try me. In which, ’tis likely, he might allude to what had happened not long before, to St. Gregory the great.

In the mean time the Persians, continuing to lay waste the eastern provinces, drove still greater numbers of people to Alexandria ; to shelter themselves there under the wings of the charity of our Saint : who not content with relieving all that came to him ; sent also very considerable alms to Modestus, the patriarch of Jerusalem, reduced at this time to great extremities, with all his people, by the Persians ;
who

who had taken that city, and burnt the churches. This alms he sent with a letter to the patriarch; begging pardon for not sending something more worthy, as he said, of the temple of God; and declaring how glad he should be, if circumstances would allow it, to come himself in person, and labour with his own hands, in rebuilding the holy church of the sepulcher and resurrection of our Lord: requesting withal that he would excuse his want of ability, and obtain for him, by his prayers, that his name might be written in the book of life.

And now this innumerable multitude of persons, that came pouring in upon Alexandria, from all parts, had made all sorts of provisions exceeding dear; the more because the harvest had failed in Egypt, the Nile not having overflowed that year as usual. The Saint, who could not endure to see any one in want, without assisting him; in this general distress, laid out all the money he had, or could any way procure, either by begging, or borrowing of good people, till all being spent, no one could be found, that would lend him any more: every body apprehending, lest by the continuance of the famine, they should come themselves to want. When behold, in these straits, as if God had a mind to try the fidelity of his servant; a rich citizen, who was desirous of being promoted to holy orders, but was hindered by the canons of the church, because he had been twice married; made him an offer of two hundred thousand bushels of wheat, which he had stored up, together with a very large sum of money, to be disposed of in charities; upon condition he would dispense with him in the irregularity, he had incurred, by his bigamy, and would ordain him deacon. The Saint told him, he could not admit of the offering, which he proposed (though it could never have come in a time, in which it was more wanted) because it was defective, and tainted by
reason

reason of that condition which he had annexed to it; whereas the law of God required, that the sacrifices offered to him, should be clean and without blemish. And as to the present necessities of his brethren the poor, and those of the church; he made no doubt, but that the same divine goodness, which had at all times taken care of them, and fed them; would still continue to do the same for them, provided, said he, we observe inviolably, what he commands us. He had no sooner given this answer, and sent away this ambitious pretender to a spiritual promotion; but his people came to tell him, that two of the great ships, belonging to the church, which he had sent to Sicily, were just arrived at the port, laden with corn. Upon which the man of God prostrated himself on the ground, and returned hearty thanks to our Lord, who had not only kept him from sin, under that trial, but had immediately sent him such a seasonable and abundant provision.

It was wonderful to see, on how many other occasions, God was pleased to furnish his servant with extraordinary supplies, in order to support his boundless charities: so that generally speaking, the more he gave away, the more he still received from the divine bounty, thro' the hands of charitable Christians; and sometimes not without an evident miracle. A citizen, who after living in very good circumstances, had been suddenly reduced to poverty, applied to the Saint, in the church, for an alms. He knowing him to have been not long before a wealthy man, had a great compassion for him; and whispered to his almoner, to give him fifteen pounds of gold. Which when the almoner was going to execute, he was perswaded by the secretary, and the steward, to give him only five pounds. The Saint returning home from the church, was met by a rich widow, who put in his hands a promissary note, by which she obliged herself to give him

him five hundred pieces of gold for the poor. He received the paper, and knowing in spirit, that this was sent, to recompense the charity given to the citizen abovementioned, he enquired, and found out that his officers had only given him five pounds, instead of fifteen. Upon which he told them they would be answerable to God, for the other thousand pieces of gold, which the good lady, that had given the note for the five hundred, had designed for the poor, if they had not abridged her charity, by not complying with his. And to convince them of this, he sent for the gentlewoman, and asked her in their presence, if the sum mentioned in the paper, was what she had first designed to give to Jesus Christ; or whether she had proposed to give him any larger sum? She finding by this question, that he had learnt from heaven all that had passed, being struck with fear and astonishment, assured him, with a most solemn protestation, that she had indeed written in the paper fifteen hundred pieces of gold; but that just before she presented it to him, looking into it, when she was at church, she found the fifteen hundred changed into five hundred; she knew not how, nor by whom, for the paper had never been in any other person's hands, but her own; and therefore she had concluded it was the will of God she should give no more than five hundred.

A captain of a ship, a stranger, having suffered great losses at sea, applied to the Saint, with many tears, begging he would have the same compassion for him, as he had for all others in distress. He ordered his almoners, to give him the weight of five pounds in gold: with which the man was enabled to equip out his vessel again, and to put to sea. But he had scarce got out of the haven, before a storm arose, in which he was forced to fling all his goods over board, and with great difficulty saved his ship. He applied again to the Saint, begging he would

have pity on him, for the sake of the Lord, who had shewn pity to him, and to all the world. The holy prelate told him, this misfortune had befallen him, because he had mingled the charity money which he received of the church, with that which remained of his own former ill-gotten stock; and therefore he had lost both. He gave him therefore now the weight of ten pounds in gold, bidding him take care not to mingle it with any other money. Thus being enabled to repair, and to load his vessel, with a fresh cargo, he tried his fortune a second time; but with worse success now than before: for he was cast away upon the coast, and lost both ship and cargo, hardly escaping with his life. This latter misfortune drove him into despair, so that he was even tempted to make away with himself. When the holy patriarch, who learnt by revelation all that had happened, sent for him; and comforted him, assuring him, that the like evil should happen to him no more: and that this was permitted, because his ship itself was ill-gotten. Then in order to set him up again, he made him captain of one of the large vessels belonging to the church of Alexandria; and sent him out, laden with twenty thousand bushels of wheat. What follows is an abstract of the account, given by the captain himself, with the most solemn asseverations, as of a most certain truth. ‘ We sailed, said he, ‘ for twenty days and twenty nights, with so violent ‘ strong a wind, that not being able at all, either by ‘ the stars, or by the sight of any land, to know where ‘ we were, we should have given ourselves up for ‘ lost; had not the pilot assured us, he saw the holy ‘ patriarch with him at the helm, bidding him not ‘ to fear; for that we were in the right road. On ‘ the twentieth day we came within sight of Great- ‘ Britain; where when we put to land, we found ‘ a great famine. So that upon our declaring that ‘ we were laden with corn, the principal magistrate of

' of the place told us, God had sent us to assist them in
 ' their extremity: and he gave us our choice, either to
 ' be paid in money; or to receive the weight of our
 ' corn in British tin. We chose to have one half in
 ' coin, the other in tin.' But see now a still greater
 wonder, wrought by our Lord in favour of his Saint,
 and as a recompence of his charity. As soon as the
 ship came safe back to the coast of Egypt, some of
 this British tin was sold by the captain to one that
 dealt in pewter, who by melting it down found it to
 be pure silver. Upon which when he went to re-
 proach the captain, as if he had suspected his honesty,
 and meant to make a trial of him; the whole was care-
 fully examined, and all found to be excellent silver.

But as on so many occasions, the Saint received
 these extraordinary supplies, to enable him to continue
 his extraordinary charities: so was he sometimes tried,
 like Job, with great losses; but these also were soon
 after made up to him, with interest. Nicetas the
 governor, pushed on by some bad counsellors, pre-
 tending the pressing necessities of the state (by occasion
 of the Persian war) demanded, in the name of the em-
 peror, and carried off all the money, which had
 been brought to the Saint for charitable uses; leaving
 him only one hundred crowns. But on the same day,
 there came people from the coasts of Barbary, bring-
 ing large sums of money, sent by charitable Christians
 for the use of the patriarch. And the governor him-
 self, before it was night (upon reading a paper, sent
 on this occasion by the man of God; in which he had
 written these words; ' Our Lord, who has said, *I*
 ' *will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee*, cannot
 ' tell a lie; because he is the truth: and therefore
 ' a wretched man, who must ere long be the food of
 ' worms, cannot tie up the hands of God, who fur-
 ' nishes all his creatures with both food and life) re-
 turned all the money he had taken away, adding to it
 three hundred crowns of his own; and offering to under-

go what penance the patriarch should be pleased to enjoin him, for his crime.

Another time the Saint suffered a very great loss; when all the vessels belonging to the church of Alexandria, to the number of thirteen, meeting with a violent storm, in the Adriatick sea, were constrained to fling overboard their whole freight, consisting in corn, and other goods. On this occasion the holy patriarch said with Job, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done, blessed be the name of the Lord.* He told his friends, who came to condole with him for this loss; that with regard to himself, he rather looked upon it as an advantage, than a loss: that he imputed it all to his sins; and to his having taken too much complacency in his alms, without sufficiently guarding against the dangerous evil of vain glory: but withal that he was very sensible of what service afflictions and humiliations are, to purify the soul from pride and vanity; according to that of the psalmist: *'Tis good for me that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy justifications.* Pf. 118. However though as to his own part, he deserved to be punished, because he had given occasion by his vanity, to so many persons being thus reduced to great necessity: yet as God was still the same as he was in the days of Job; he trusted, that notwithstanding his own unworthiness, he would still, in consideration of so many other poor sufferers, help them out of this distress. And this his confidence was not vain: for not long after our Lord sent him, by one way or another, twice as much as he had lost: all which he employed, in comforting and assisting, more abundantly than ever, the poor and distressed.

One of the domesticks of the Saint being under a pressing necessity; the Saint understanding it, privately gave him with his own hand, the weight of two pounds in gold. Upon which, when the man told him,

him, he did not know how he should be able to look him any more in the face; so much was he confounded at his exceeding great goodness to him: the Saint replied: 'Brother, I have not yet shed my blood for you, as Christ our common master, and our God has done for us all; and has commanded us to do for our brethren.'

Another citizen, being pressed to discharge a debt, which he had not for the present the means to pay, addressed himself to a rich nobleman, begging he would lend him, upon proper security, fifty pounds of gold. He promised he would, but delayed the putting his promise in execution: so that the other being still called upon by his creditors, and apprehending lest they should come to extremities, had recourse to the holy patriarch, whose heart and hand was ever open to relieve the necessities of all that came to him. He had no sooner told him his case; but the Saint replied: 'My son, if your necessity required it, I would even give you my cloaths off my back:' and without any delay, he lent him the whole sum, which he wanted. The following night, the nobleman saw in a dream a person standing upon an altar, and many other persons below, who came to make their offerings to him; and for every offering which they laid upon the altar, they received of him a hundred times as much. He seemed also to see the holy patriarch there, coming in after him; and that there was upon a bench before them a sum of money, which one of the standers by bid him take up, and offer upon the altar, that he might receive a hundred fold: but as he was dilatory in doing it, the patriarch, who stood behind him, stepped forward, and took up the offering, and put it upon the altar, and presently received a hundred fold. The next morning the nobleman sent for the man, and offered to let him have the money he wanted: but he told him, the holy patriarch had

been before hand with him in this good work, and in the reward of it: letting him know, how he had been obliged to have recourse to him, and had been readily assisted by him. Upon which the other declared the vision he had seen, and loudly condemned himself, for having lost, by his backwardness in doing good, that great reward which the divine bounty gives to good works done for God's sake.

Amongst many others, who seeing the boundless charities of the Saint, brought their money to him, to be disposed of, at his discretion, for the relief of the poor; a man, who had an only son of fifteen years of age, brought him one day the weight of seven pounds and a half in gold, assuring him it was all the money he had; and only begging of him to pray for his son, (whom he had sent in a ship to the coast of Africa) that God would save him, and bring him back with his vessel to the haven. The Saint did not fail to pray himself, and to recommend earnestly to the prayers of his clergy, the welfare of the youth, and of his vessel; as the man had desired. When behold, before thirty days were over, the boy was taken ill, and died: and soon after the ship (in which was also the brother of the same man) in returning home, was cast away near the port of Alexandria: and nothing at all was saved, but the lives of the persons, and the boat. The loss of his son, and of his ship, coming so quickly one after the other, caused an inexpressible affliction to the poor man. The holy patriarch was also very much affected with it: more especially because of the death of this only son. Wherefore, not knowing what else to do, he begged of the *Father of mercies, and God of all consolation*, to assist and comfort this poor afflicted parent. Then sending to the man (for he had not the courage to see him, or to speak to him himself) he desired him not to lose his confidence in his God; who does nothing but with just judgment; and orders every thing

thing, according to what he knows is best for us, though we know it not : and therefore he warned him to take care, lest by any misbehaviour of his, on this occasion, he should bereave himself of the great reward, which God had prepared, to recompense that faith, and charity he had shewed, in the offering he had made to God. This message was followed by a dream, or vision in the night, in which the man of God appeared to the afflicted parent in his sleep, and said to him. ‘ Why do you afflict yourself, brother, and suffer yourself thus to be oppressed with grief ? Did you not desire me to pray to God, to save your son ? And behold he has saved him. For I can assure you, that if he had lived, he would have been a very lewd man. And as for your ship : if God had not been moved to mercy, by the good work you did, in addressing your charity to me, it would have been lost with all the persons on board ; so that you would have lost your brother also. Get up then, and give thanks to God for having preserved the life of your brother ; and for having saved your son, by taking him to himself, before he was corrupted by the wicked ways and vanities of the world.’ Upon this the man awaked, and found himself wonderfully comforted ; and early in the morning went to the patriarch, to return thanks to God, and to him, and related to him the vision he had seen. The holy man glorified God for his infinite goodness ; and desired the other, to attribute nothing of this to his prayers, but all to God alone, and to the faith he had in God. For this blessed prelate had always a very mean opinion of himself ; as was manifest from all his words, and his whole comportment ; and he would never suffer any thing of good to be ascribed to him.

One of the principal men of the city, taking notice that the Saint, who was so liberal to others, al-

lowed himself, for his lodging, only a poor little bed on the floor, with an old tattered blanket for a covering; sent him in one day a rich coverlet (that cost six and thirty pieces of silver) conjuring him that he would make use of it for his sake. The servant of God, yielding to his importunity, used it for one night: but as they, that lay in the same chamber, took notice, instead of sleeping, he was all the night reproaching himself with lying under such a rich covering, whilst the brethren of Jesus Christ, as he called the poor, were starving with hunger, and cold, and destitute of all the commodities of life. ‘ And thou
‘ that pretendest to the joys of a happy eternity, said
‘ he to himself, thou drinkest wine, thou eatest
‘ good fish, thou art well lodged, and now like one
‘ of the children of this wicked world, thou art also,
‘ warmly covered, and lyeest at thy ease, under a
‘ coverlet, that cost six and thirty pieces of silver.
‘ Surely living in this unmortified manner, instead of
‘ looking for the joys of heaven in the world to come,
‘ thou hast reason rather to apprehend that sentence
‘ pronounced on the rich man, to whom it was said
‘ Luke xvi. *Thou hast received good things in thy life
‘ time, whilst the poor received evil things: and there-
‘ fore they are now comforted, and thou art tormented.*’
The conclusion was, that he resolved to get rid of this rich piece of furniture, the next morning, and to sell it for the benefit of the poor: and so he did, without any delay. And whereas the gentleman his friend, seeing it exposed for sale, bought it again, and sent it to him, entreating him to make use of it; he sold it a second time, and again gave the price of it to the poor: and so in like manner a third time: telling his friend, with a pleasant countenance,
‘ we shall see now, which of us two shall be wearied
‘ first.’ This gentleman was very rich, and one from whom the Saint received many things; which he gave to the poor. Upon which occasions, he used

to say, it was no harm, to get all one could from the rich, for the service of the poor : since in so doing, one serves both the one and the other ; the poor, by relieving their wants, and the rich, by giving them the occasion to purchase heaven by their alms.

Amongst other exercises, and lessons of charity, which the Saint inculcated to his people ; we must not pass over his sentiments, with regard to the manner, that masters ought to treat their servants. Hear how he expressed himself one day on this subject, to one who was cruel and inhuman to his slaves : ‘ My son, said he to him, with a great deal of mildness, I understand that by the temptation of the enemy, you are apt to treat your servants ill : let me beg of you, for the time to come, to stay till your passion is over, before you offer to correct them. For God has given them to us, that they may serve us ; but not for us to beat and abuse them. And perhaps he may have given us them, more for the exercising our patience, in supporting their faults and defects, than for any other service they can do. But tell me, Sir, with what price could you buy any one of these, who has the honour to have been created, no less than yourself, after the image and likeness of God ? And though you are his master, what have you, either in body, or soul, that he has not ? Give ear to St. Paul, Gal. iii. *All you that have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ : there is no distinction of Jew or Gentile, bond or free—you are all one in Christ Jesus.* Jesus Christ by taking himself the form of a servant, has taught us, that we ought not to lift ourselves up by pride over them, whom he has made our servants. For as the prophet teaches us Ps. 112. *There is but one great master and Lord of the universe, who is high above all nations, and his glory is above the heavens : and who looketh down upon the low things, in heaven and in earth : he does not say on the high things but on the low*

‘*low things.*’ And how do we pretend to domineer
 ‘over them, who have been redeemed no less than
 ‘ourselves with the blood of our God, and of our
 ‘master; and for whose service he has made the
 ‘heavens, the sun, the stars, the earth, the sea, and
 ‘all the things therein; for whose service he employs
 ‘his angels; and for whom the Son of God has sub-
 ‘jected himself to all the humiliations and torments
 ‘of his passion? And shall you then, Sir, treat with
 ‘contempt this man, whom God treats with honour?
 ‘shall you strike him, as you would do a beast, and
 ‘as if you were not of the same nature as he? Tell
 ‘me, would you be willing, that every time you of-
 ‘fend God, he should punish you the same moment?
 ‘I am certain you would not. How then can you
 ‘say daily to God in your prayers, *forgive us our tres-*
 ‘*passes, as we forgive them, that trespass against us?*’
 Or how do you do, as you would be done by?

This charity, which the Saint inculcated to others,
 he ever practised himself; without excepting his very
 enemies, or those who had injured, or wronged him,
 or his. On the contrary, he shewed greater favours, to
 such as these, that he might overcome evil with good.
 He even humbled himself sometimes to impenitent
 sinners, by casting himself at their feet, and begging
 their pardon (where the fault was wholly theirs, and
 not his) that by this means, he might bring them to
 a reconciliation with God, and his church.

One day a beggar, having asked an alms of the ho-
 ly patriarch, he ordered them that accompanied him
 to give him ten pieces of brass. The man, who ex-
 pected more, instead of thanks, returned him very
 abusive language, and treated him in a most insolent
 manner. They that were present, were moved to in-
 dignation, and would have punished the wretch upon
 the spot. But the Saint severely reprov'd them, and
 bid them ‘Let him say on what he had a mind to
 ‘say. For why should not I, my brethren, said he,
 ‘suffer

• suffer this small injury, from a poor man ; I who
• for these sixty years have been continually offending,
• and injuring my God, by my sins ?

Amongst other charities, the Saint also founded several hospitals: and when there was a great mortality at Alexandria, he was very assiduous in attending such as were at the point of death, and assisting them in their agony. He was also very diligent in ordering prayers for the souls of the faithful departed. And in recommendation of this charity, and as a proof of the efficacy of such prayers as these; he related what had happened not long before, to a countryman of his; who had been carried away captive by the Persians, and cast into a prison called *Lethe*, or *Oblivion*. His friends, having heard that he was dead, procured prayers to be said, three times in the year, for the repose of his soul: at which times, as he assure them, when after four years, he made his escape out of prison, and returned home to them; he was always visited, and comforted by a person shining like the sun; and was delivered on those occasions from his chains, for the whole day.

The Saint recommended very much to his people, the remembrance of death, as a most wholesome meditation for all men. And having been told, that on the day of the coronation of the emperor, several pieces of marble of different sorts, were presented to him, that he might choose the kind, which he would have employed for his tomb; to the end, that being ever mindful of his mortality, and of his speedy return to dust, he might not suffer himself to be puffed up with pride; but take care to live, and to govern, so, as to be always prepared for his last end: he also, with the same intention, gave orders to have a sepulchre prepared for himself, amongst the tombs of the patriarchs his predecessors; but that it should not be finished till his death: in the mean time he desired that the workmen, upon certain solemn days, should
come,

come, and tell him, in presence of all his clergy: ‘My lord, your tomb remains imperfect, give orders if you please, that it may be finished: since you know not the hour, as the scripture says, when the thief shall come.’ He also often entertained his friends, that came to visit him, with this same subject, of the continual thought we ought to have of death, and of that separation which shall then be of the soul from the body. ‘I am of opinion, said he, that the means to work out our salvation, is to be always thinking with sorrow, of the hour of our death: to consider well, that we shall have no one to share with us the pains and conflicts, we must then go through: that all the world shall abandon us at that hour, only our good works shall not abandon us: to think what our astonishment and trouble shall be, if at our departure hence, we are not prepared for our trial: to reflect that it will be in vain then to ask for a little more time to do penance in; when we shall be reproached, for having had so much, and made such ill use of it. And how, said he, shall poor John (for so he commonly called himself) escape the claws of those cruel beasts, that shall watch to catch him, at his departure hence? What shall he do, when he shall see before him those bands of evil spirits; who shall strictly examine him, and charge home upon him all the evil he had done?’ Which he said, alluding to a vision, in which St. Simeon Stylites had seen in spirit, how at the time of the separation of the soul from the body, when she would willingly fly up towards heaven, she meets with devils in her way, divided into different companies, according to the different vices, which they usually suggest: and that the demons of pride examine the soul upon the sins committed in that kind; those of impurity examine her upon all her carnal sins, and impure delectations; those of detraction, upon every word, that has
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proceeded out of her mouth against her neighbour ; and so of all her other sins. This vision our Saint had often in mind : as also that passage of the life of St. Hilarion, of the fear and apprehension he had, and the words he spoke to his soul, when he was upon the point of death. And therefore he would often be saying to himself : ‘ If so great a Saint, who had
 ‘ served our Lord for such a number of years, who
 ‘ had wrought so many miracles, and even raised
 ‘ the dead to life, yet apprehended so much that
 ‘ dreadful hour, what shalt thou be able to say, or
 ‘ what shalt thou be able to do, when thou shalt
 ‘ find thyself encompassed with those cruel and un-
 ‘ merciful examiners of all thy actions ? What
 ‘ shalt thou be able to answer to such of these unhap-
 ‘ py spirits, as shall examine thee, with regard to
 ‘ thy lies, or thy detraction, or thy hardheartedness,
 ‘ or thy avarice, or thy remembrance of injuries, or
 ‘ thy ill will, &c. O good God, let thy almighty
 ‘ hand defend me at that hour, from all the efforts
 ‘ of these enemies of my salvation ! Let thy goodness
 ‘ send thy Angels to guide me, and conduct me safe
 ‘ in this last great and dangerous journey, from time
 ‘ to eternity !’ Such were the sentiments of our Saint, in his entertainments upon this most interesting subject, of the soul’s passage out of this world, into the other.

St. John had now for ten years, as *a burning and a shining light*, illustrated the church of Alexandria : when the time drawing near, in which our Lord was to take him to himself, he resigned his patriarchal see, and retired into his native country of Cyprus, in order to prepare himself there for eternity. As soon as he arrived at Amathus, the city in which he was born, having a foreknowledge by revelation of his approaching death, he made his last will and testament to this effect : ‘ I John, who was born a slave to sin,
 ‘ but have been made a free man, by the grace of my
 God,

‘ God, who without any deserts of mine, has raised
‘ me to the priestly dignity ; return thee most hum-
‘ ble thanks, O Lord, that thou hast vouchsafed to
‘ hear the prayer, I have made to thee, that I should
‘ not possess at my death, any more than one small
‘ piece of money : and that whereas when I was
‘ made bishop, I had great treasures at my disposal ;
‘ and have received since immense sums from thy
‘ servants, thou hast always made me sensible that
‘ all this store was thine, and hast done me the fa-
‘ vour, ever to give back to thee without delay,
‘ what belonged to thee : therefore as this piece of
‘ money, which remains, belongs also to thee, no
‘ less than all the rest ; I desire it may be likewise
‘ returned to thee, by putting it into the hands of
‘ the poor.’

St. John the Almoner, departed to our Lord in the sixty-fourth year of his age, anno 616. His body was entered in the church of Amathus, in the chappel of St. Tychon, formerly bishop of that see, where many miracles were afterwards wrought by his intercession. His name is recorded in the Roman martyrology on the twenty-third of January.



S T. S Y N C L E T I C A.

From her ancient life, by a writer of the same age, believed by many, to have been St. Athanasius.

St. Syncletica was born at Alexandria (in the latter part of the third century) of Christian parents, rich and noble according to the world: whom God had blessed with four children; two sons, and two daughters. One of the sons died very young: the other, having attained to the age of twenty-five, when, at the desire of his parents, he was contracted to a young lady, and all things were prepared for the solemnizing of the marriage; was suddenly carried off by death, into another region, where *they neither marry, nor are given in marriage*. Syncletica, the eldest of the two daughters, from her tender years consecrated her heart to the love of Christ; and accustomed herself, to the exercises of Christian piety, and solid devotion; taking always far more care of the soul than of the body. As she advanced in age, she grew up in virtue, and in the love of purity; which determined her to choose no other spouse but Jesus Christ. For the love of him, she rejected the most advantageous offers that could be made her, according to the world: and instead of the outward ornaments of the body, which those of her age and quality are usually so fond of, she diligently procured the better ornaments of the inward house of her soul; where she desired to entertain the king of kings, who is beautiful above the sons of men. Hence she carefully shunned all dangerous worldly diversions, and all unprofitable conversations; but loved always the conversation of such as entertained her with godly discourses, and with exhortations to piety: to these she hearkened with diligent attention; laying up their words in her memory, and meditating

meditating often upon them. In the mean time she was exceeding temperate, and mortified in her eating and drinking; looking upon this virtue as the best preservative of purity: and though her fastings and abstinences made her lean and pale, she minded it not: being not desirous to please the eyes of men, but of God; and finding by experience that what weakened the body served to strengthen the soul. However she was always discreet in these corporal mortifications; and took all possible care to conceal them, from being seen, and observed by others.

Her parents dying, left her mistress of all their worldly substance. So that now finding herself at full liberty, to follow the call of God; and to retire altogether from the world: after having made a sufficient trial of herself, by way of preparation for those austerities she designed to embrace: she disposed of all her wealth in favour of the poor; and cutting off her hair, in token of her renouncing the world, and all its superfluities; she withdrew herself from the town, and chose for her dwelling place, for the remainder of the days of her mortality, a sepulchre, or monument, in the neighbourhood: taking also along with her, her younger sister, who was desirous of following the same kind of life. Here she lived separated in a manner from all conversation, either of men or women, in the exercises of mortification and penance, and continual prayer. Her food was coarse bread, made of bran; her ordinary drink was water; she often lay upon the bare ground: and as the watchful enemy plied her with frequent and troublesome temptations; she opposed to all his assaults the buckler of faith, with the helmet of hope, and confidence in our Lord; to whom she had continual recourse: and on these occasions, she redoubled her austerities, in order to keep the flesh in subjection: yet so as still to have an eye upon the *salt* of prudence and discretion, with which our Lord will

will have all *sacrifices seasoned*, which we offer to him. *Levit. ii. 13.* Far from conceiving a good opinion of herself, for having quitted her worldly goods; she kept herself always humble, by thinking, she was still at a very great distance from what she ought to be. And not contenting herself with that voluntary poverty, which she had embraced, when she renounced all exteriour possessions; she made it her chiefest labour, to purify her soul from all desires and affections to any thing created, and from all the spiritual vices, that are apt to lurk in the interior.

Notwithstanding that she sought with all her power to hide her virtues from the eyes of others; and to avoid, as much as possible, all commerce with the world: yet she could not keep herself so concealed, but that the sweet odour of her saintly life, breaking forth from her sepulchre, spread itself by degrees over all the neighbourhood: God almighty so ordering it for his own greater glory, and for the good of a great number of souls. Hence many devout virgins came to visit her, desiring to profit by her heavenly conversation; and to learn of her the lessons of a truly christian life, and of religious perfection. At first her humility would not suffer her to open her mouth, to give them the instructions they desired: but when they pressed her to speak to them of divine matters, she contented herself with edifying them by her silence, by her sighs, and by her tears: till at length, her charity prevailing over her humility, she yielded to their importunity, and gave them many excellent lessons, for the regulating of their lives: set down at large, by my author in her life; as a rule for holy virgins, that aspire after religious perfection; of whom this great Saint is commonly looked upon the mother, and foundress.

She begins by recommending to them, as the principal lesson of all, to have always before their eyes,

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and to imprint deep in their hearts, the commandments of God ; especially these two : *thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart &c. And thy neighbour as thyself* : which she tells them are an abridgment of the whole divine law ; and comprize all that God desires of us, and all perfection. That in the exercise of this divine love, those that desire to dedicate themselves to God, must set themselves no bounds ; but must endeavour always to advance ; that they must not content themselves, with being the land that bringeth forth only *thirtyfold* ; but must labour to bring forth *sixty*, and a *hundredfold*. That as it would be infinitely dangerous for them, to fall from a higher degree of virtue to a lower ; from bringing forth sixty, to bring forth only thirty ; because it is so natural, when once one begins to sink downwards, to fall lower and lower, till one is carried headlong down the precipice ; so must they never think of standing still in the way of God, (which would in effect be going backwards) but as the Apostle admonishes Philip iii. 13. 14. *forgetting the things that are behind them, and stretching forth themselves to those that are before, should still be pressing forward towards the mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

In the next place, she tells them, that in order to preserve and maintain the purity of their souls and bodies, they must exercise themselves, in the mortification of their sensual appetite : and this not only with regard to their eating and drinking ; but also with relation to the guard, they ought always to keep upon their eyes, their ears, their tongue, &c. lest the angels of darkness, who are the robbers and murderers, that are always seeking, to do what mischief they can to our souls, should steal into the soul by any of these avenues, if they should be left unguarded. Therefore she recommends to them a spirit of recollection and retirement ; and to have as little communication as possible with the world. For how, says she, can a house
escape

escape being sullied, and made black by the smoky, which surrounds it, on all sides, abroad, if the doors and windows are always open to let it in? She adds, that they must, according to our Lord's prescription, be ever *wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*: wisely watching against all the deceits and assaults of the wicked one, who is ever besieging them within and without; and in all their actions, keeping close to God, by purity and simplicity, both in their intention and affection: and that the arms they must continually make use of in this warfare, are the exercises of a spiritual life, more especially fasting and fervent prayer.

She proceeds to treat of the advantages of voluntary poverty, and of leaving all things for Christ: shewing that nothing can be of greater service than this to a soul, that has, by the exercise of other virtues, and by the custom of mortifying herself, in eating, drinking, hard lodging, &c. first learnt to be content with little, and to be willing to give up her own will, her inclinations and pleasures for God. For when we have renounced all the perishable goods of the earth, we easily learn to turn our eyes towards heaven; and to seek that hidden treasure alone, which is able to make us rich, for eternity, in the happy possession of God himself. And what a shame it is, said she, that we should not be ready, to undergo all kind of labours and sufferings, for acquiring such a treasure as this, when we daily see the children of this world, expose themselves to far greater labours, sufferings and dangers, for the sake of a little worldly dirt.

She also warns them against making a show of their virtues, or publishing their good actions, by talking of them to others: for as a treasure, that is exposed in public, to the eyes of all; is quickly taken away and lost; so virtue presently fades, and quite evaporates, when one makes a show of it, or publishes it to the world. Praise and applause are apt to weaken the vigour of the soul: which on the other hand commonly

receives greater strength, from affronts, reproaches and injuries. She therefore would have them rejoice, under such sufferings, as these: and as for sadness in general, strive to drive it far away from them, as an enemy, by prayer, and spiritual canticles; that wholesome sorrow only excepted, *which is according to God*; and by which we grieve for our offending him.

She goes on, by recommending very much to them, a constant watchfulness over themselves; and that they be ever fearful, and mistrustful of themselves; and never think themselves secure in this life. Upon which occasion, she treats at large of the excellence and necessity of self-knowledge and humility: and warns them against the pernicious evil of pride (which she tells them is the most heinous of all sins) and against all self-conceit and presumption, and all the rest of the daughters of pride; such as the passion of anger, the resentment and remembrance of injuries, the vices of envy and detraction: all which being spiritual sins, are often overlooked and neglected; and yet are apt to leave behind them mortal wounds, in the most noble parts of the soul: wounds the more hard to be cured, as they are generally less apprehended.

The Saint also gave her spiritual daughters many other excellent documents; which the author of her life has set down at large: who assures us, that what she taught them by words, she continually enforced by her actions and examples: and that no tongue was capable of expressing the spiritual advantages, that all those that were so happy as to see and hear her, received from her heavenly conversation; and the incredible fruits, which by her means were produced in many souls.

Syncletica continued her regular exercises of devotion and penance, advancing daily more and more in the love of God, till she was arrived at the age of fourscore years. At which time our Lord was pleased to permit her, to be afflicted with most violent interior pains and diseases, joined with horrible temptations; as if

Satan

Satan had obtained leave from God, to try and torment her, as he did Job, with a complication of the rudest and severest sufferings. She passed through this course of penance, for the space of three years and a half, with an incredible patience, and courage, to the great edification of all that came near her: to whom she ceased not to preach both by word and example. In the latter part of this time, to the rest of her sufferings, was added that of a cancer in her mouth; which spread itself so as to eat up a great part of her face; and besides the pain, and the insupportable stench which it caused, hindered her from being able either to eat, or to speak. In this condition, she continued suffering, like a martyr, for the space of three months; supported only by divine grace: till the end of her life approaching, she was favoured with a rapt, or extasy, in which she saw the glory and light of the heavenly mansions, which were prepared for her; and troops of Angels and holy virgins, who invited her to come, and join their happy company. Returning to herself, she found herself able, to give her last instructions, to the virgins, that were about her: exhorting them particularly to constancy, courage and perseverance, in their holy undertaking: and telling them, that within three days, at the hour, which she named, she should be taken away from them. Accordingly when that hour came, her pure soul took its flight from this vale of tears, and went to take possession of the kingdom of her heavenly bridegroom. Her name is recorded in the Roman martyrology, on the fifth of January.



St. T H A I S, the Penitent.

From an ancient Greek Writer.

TH A I S was a native of Egypt, who being exceeding beautiful, was so unhappy, as to be betrayed, and prostituted by her own mother, to infamy and sin. She followed a most wicked course of life for a long time: and by reason of her extraordinary beauty, was the ruin of many; who spent their fortunes on her; and frequently quarrelled about her; insomuch, that murders were sometimes committed on her occasion. There lived at this time, in a neighbouring desert, a holy abbot, called Paphnucius: who hearing of the wretched life she led, and of the havock satan, by her means, made amongst the youth of that part of Egypt, was inspired with a desire, and design to attempt her conversion. For this purpose, procuring a secular habit, and taking some money with him, he went to the place, where she lived: and desiring to speak to her in private, was introduced by her into a chamber richly furnished. He asked, if she had not some more retired apartment? She said, she had. But what was he afraid of? for as for men; she assured him, no mortal could see them, or come in upon them, where they were: and as for God, he would equally see them, wherever they went? O! said he, dost thou then believe there is a God; whose all-seeing eye is always upon us? Yes, Sir, said she, I do believe, there is an all-seeing God: and what is more, I do believe there is a heaven, where the good shall be rewarded with never ending bliss; and that there is also a hell, where the wicked shall be tormented for all eternity.

Paphnucius, glad to hear her make this profession of her faith, began to represent to her the dismal state of her soul, and the dreadful account she must give one day, for the souls of so many others, whom she had
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drawn into sin : and this in so pathetick a manner; and with that powerful unction, and blessing of divine grace; that, perceiving him to be a man of God, she cast herself at his feet, all bathed in her tears; and gave herself up to be directed by him: offering herself to go through whatsoever penance, he should think proper to appoint for her; and that in what place he pleased, and without delay. Hoping, as she said, that God would shew her mercy, through his prayers. Paphnucius named her the place, where she should come to him; and went his way: and she prepared herself to follow him. But first she gathered together all she had acquired by sin, and all the rich presents of her lovers; and made a bonfire of them all, in the middle of the street; in the sight of all the people, and of them, that had been the accomplices of her crimes: declaring aloud her detestation of her wicked life; and of every thing, that had served to detain her in that criminal way. Having made this first sacrifice, she repaired to the place, which Paphnucius had named: and he took her along with him to a monastery of nuns; where he shut her up in a cell by herself; and stopt up the door: only leaving a small window, through which he desired the sisters to convey to her a little bread and water every day; which was to be her whole allowance for the remainder of her life.

She asked him, before they parted, what prayers he would recommend to her: and in what manner he would have her address herself to God in prayer? Thou art not worthy, said he, to name the holy name of God with thy polluted lips; nor to stretch forth thy hands, or lift up thy eyes to heaven, after so many abominations. But let it be enough for thee, to sit turned towards the East; and frequently to repeat these words: *Thou that hast made me have mercy on me.*

She continued this course of penance for three years, shut up in this manner: till Paphnucius, having compassion for her, went to consult the great St. Antony,

(at that time the oracle of Egypt) to learn of him, whether God had accepted of her penance, and forgiven her her sins. St. Antony assembled together his disciples, and recommended to them all, to beg earnestly of God, that he would be pleased to let them know the thing, that Paphnucius inquired after. They did so; and St. Paul the Simple saw that night in a vision, a glorious throne, or bed of state, in heaven, surrounded by three virgins, glittering with beams of heavenly light. And as he was thinking with himself, that this throne could be designed for no other, but his father Antony. He was answered by a voice: 'It is not for thy father Antony, but for Thais, the harlot.' This vision being notified to Paphnucius, he concluded, it was the will of God, that Thais should be released from her confinement: and therefore he opened the door to let her out. She, for her part, desired to remain always there; but humbly acquiesced to the will of her holy director. He told her, God had forgiven her sins. And she assured him, that from the time she had first entered into that cell, she had collected together all her sins, as it were into one heap; and had placed them there before her eyes; and had never ceased to think on them, and to bewail them.

'Tis on account of this your contrition, said Paphnucius, God has shewed you mercy; and not for the rigour of your penance. She lived no longer than fifteen days, after she was taken out of her penitential enclosure: and then she was called to see *the good things of our Lord in the land of the living.*



St. P E L A G I A, the Penitent.

From her life, by James the deacon, her cotemporary.

PELAGIA, was a famous actress, in the city of Antioch, the capital at that time of Syria, and of all the Orient. Her extraordinary beauty drew after her many lovers; and she was so unhappy, as to yield herself up to a very sinful course of life, without the least restraint: though she professed a belief in Christ, and had formerly been admitted into the number of catechumens, who were under instruction for baptism: but now had left all off, and never came near the church. It happened at this time (about the beginning of the fifth century) that divers bishops, and others of the clergy, were assembled at Antioch, upon some ecclesiastical affairs: amongst whom was the holy prelate Nonnus, who from a monk of the monastery of Tabenna, was for his admirable virtue, and wisdom, made bishop of Heliopolis. These prelates were lodged in the neighbourhood of the church of St. Julianus the martyr; where they met together, to treat upon the affairs, that had called them to Antioch. One day, as they were sitting before the church, and St. Nonnus was entertaining them with a spiritual conference, to the great edification of all, that heard him: Pelagia passed before them, with great pomp, decked up with gold, perles, and precious stones; and accompanied with a numerous train of young men and young women. Her beauty, with the lustre of her jewels, and her rich attire, drew upon her the eyes of all the fond admirers of these empty toys: but the prelates turned away their faces from her; the more, because they were offended with the immodesty of her dress; she having no veil over her head, and her very shoulders being uncovered. Only Nonnus seemed to take much notice of her, and to consider her with great attention. Af-
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ter she was passed, turning to his fellow-bishops, he said to them, with many sighs and tears: 'I fear, God will one day bring this woman, to confront us before the throne of his justice; in order to condemn our negligence and tepidity, in his service; and in the discharge of our duty to the flock, he has committed to our care. For how many hours, do you think, she has employed this very day in her chamber, in washing and cleansing herself, in dressing, adorning, and setting out her whole person to the best advantage, in order to shew forth her beauty, to please the eyes of the world, and particularly her unhappy lovers, who are alive to day, and possibly may be dead to morrow? Whereas we, who have an almighty Father in heaven; an immortal spouse, to whose love and service we have consecrated ourselves; we, to whom the immense and eternal treasures of heaven are promised, for the reward of our short labours upon earth, are far from taking the like pains, to wash and purify our souls from their stains, and to procure for them those bright ornaments of virtue, and sanctity; which alone can render them truly agreeable in the eyes of our Lord.' Having spoken to this effect, he rose up, and returned to his lodging; and there prostrating himself on the floor, bitterly lamented his misery, in having suffered himself to be thus outdone by a sinful woman; and implored the divine mercy, for the forgiveness of this his negligence and tepidity.

The next day, being Sunday, all the bishops assembled in the great church, where the patriarch of Antioch celebrated mass. After the gospel was read, he presented the book to St. Nonnus, and desired him to make an exhortation to the people. The holy prelate obeyed, and made a most moving discourse, full of the unction of the Spirit of God, on the subject of the last judgment, and of the world to come; which drew tears from the eyes of all his auditory. The divine
mercy

mercy had drawn thither Pelagia also, who had not been within a church of a long time before : and this sermon made so deep an impression on her soul, that she could not help sighing, and sobbing, and pouring out floods of tears, through the sense it gave her of her sins. As soon as the divine service was over, she sent a letter to the holy prelate, to this effect. ‘ To the holy disciple of Jesus Christ, from a sinful wretch, a scholar of the devil. I have learnt, that the God, whom you worship, came down from heaven to the earth, not for the sake of the just, but to save poor sinners : that he humbled himself so far, as to suffer publicans to come to him ; and did not disdain to speak with the sinful Samaritan woman, at the well. Wherefore, as I understand, that though you never have seen him, with your mortal eyes, you are a follower of his, and have served him faithfully, for many years ; I conjure you, for his sake, to shew yourself to be his true disciple, by suffering a poor sinner to come to you ; and not despise the extreme desire I have, to approach to him, by your assistance.’ The Saint sent her word, that if she was sincere in her desires of instruction and conversion, she might come to him, to the church of St. Julianus, where he would speak to her, in the presence of the other bishops ; not thinking it proper, to converse with her in private.

Pelagia had no sooner received this permission, but she went, running all the way, to the church of St. Julianus ; and there cast herself at the feet of the holy prelate : earnestly begging of him, by the example of his great master, to receive the worst of sinners, and to cleanse her from all her filth, and abominations, in the fountain of baptism. The Saint told her, that by the discipline of the church, persons like her, who had been a long time engaged in criminal habits, could not be admitted to baptism, without giving proper sureties ; who should answer for their returning no more to their sinful ways. She not being able, to bear the
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enormous weight of her sins, or to continue any longer under the filth of them, was unwilling to hear of any delay : but embracing the feet of the servant of God, and washing them with whole floods of tears, she conjured him, to baptize her upon the spot : that she might be presently freed from her crimes, and regenerated to a new life ; and so presented without spot to Jesus Christ. And this she begged with so much instance, and with such demonstrations of a lively faith, and of an ardent desire of saving her soul ; that the prelates were all of opinion, that the hand of God shewing itself here in such an extraordinary manner, her request ought to be admitted. They sent therefore to acquaint the patriarch with all that had passed ; who approved of her being baptized : and sent, the lady Romana, the chiefest of the widows, that were in the service of the great church, to attend her as godmother on this occasion. This good lady found her still (bemoaning her sins) at the feet of the Saint : from which she would not be removed, till he commanded her to rise, in order to proceed to the exorcisms, and prayers used by the church before baptism. After which, and a public confession and detestation of all her crimes, he baptized her : and then, according to the custom of the church in those days, he also administered to her the sacraments of confirmation, and of the body of our Lord.

That same day, as my author relates, who was himself present (being deacon to St. Nonnus) when the holy bishop and he were at table together, rejoicing, with the Angels, upon the conversion of so great a sinner ; they heard distinctly before the door a voice, as of one bitterly complaining, in these or the like words. ‘ Alas ! alas ! must I continually be tormented in this manner, by this crazy old fellow ? Art thou not content with having robbed me heretofore of no fewer than thirty thousand souls, of the nation of the Saracens ; which thou hast presented to
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‘thy God? Is it not enough for thee, to have also
‘snatched out of my hands the city of Heliopolis,
‘which was mine; and where all the people wor-
‘shipped me? Must thou also take away from me now
‘the greatest hope I had left? And dost thou think, I
‘will always bear with thee; or support any longer
‘the persecutions thou makest me suffer?’ Thus sa-
tan expressed his grief, at the loss of his prey, and his
rage against the holy prelate: who took no notice of
him; but armed his convert against all the efforts and
temptations of this enemy; and taught her to drive
him away, by a confidence in her Saviour, and by the
sign of his holy cross.

The third day after her baptism, Pelagia having
taken an inventory of all her plate, jewels, rich clothes,
and other goods, put it into the hands of St. Nonnus,
saying: ‘my lord, here is the whole of the goods, I
‘have acquired from the devil. I give them all up to
‘your disposal: give your orders about them, as you
‘shall judge to be for the best. For my part, I desire
‘no other riches, for the time to come, but those of
‘my Saviour Jesus Christ.’ The holy prelate sent
forthwith for the treasurer of the church, and delivering
the inventory into his hands, charged him, as he
should answer it to God, to divert no part of those
goods to the service, either of the bishop, or of the
church: but to distribute all to poor widows and or-
phans, and such like objects: that if they had been ill
gotten, they might now at least be well employed. On
the same day, Pelagia set at liberty all her slaves, both
men and women: earnestly exhorting them, to shake
off at the same time that yoke of servitude, by which
they had jointly with her been slaves to this corrupt
and sinful world: that so they might pass over to the
true liberty of the children of God; and come one
day with her to the enjoyment of that true and eternal
life, which knows neither sorrow, nor sin.

On the eighth day, when those that had been baptised, according to the ancient custom of the church, put off the white garment, they received at their baptism; Pelagia, rising privately in the night, exchanged her white garment, for a long habit of haircloth, and an old mantle, which she had received from St. Nonnus: and without communicating her design to any one, but him; she withdrew herself from Antioch: and going into the Holy land, she took up her habitation for life, in a narrow cell, upon mount Olivet: where she lived as an anchoress, shut up in such a manner, as to have only a small window, through which she might receive the necessaries of life: and spending her time wholly with our Lord in fasting and prayer. The other religious, inhabitants of this holy mountain, knew not who she was; nor so much as that she was a woman: for she had concealed her sex, calling herself by the name of Pelagius: but all of them admired the great abstraction, austerity, and sanctity of her life.

Some years after this, my author James the deacon, made a pilgrimage of devotion, to visit the sepulchre of our Lord at Jerusalem. Upon this occasion his holy bishop recommended to him, to inquire after a servant of God, named Pelagius, that led an anchoritical life upon mount Olivet. He executed his commission, little thinking, that this anchoress was the famous Pelagia, whom he had seen baptised, and who presently after disappeared, and was heard of no more. And though he readily found out the cell, by inquiring of the religious, who dwelt in the neighbourhood; and went and spoke to her through the window; yet she was so far altered by her austerities that he knew her not. He told her, he came by the desire of bishop Nonnus, to enquire after her. Nonnus, said she, is a great Saint: and I beg, that he will pray for me. With that she shut her window, and began to sing Tierce, or the third hour of the divine office: whilst the deacon was praying without; much comforted with
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having seen so holy a person. Afterwards visiting the monasteries round about, and finding that all the servants of God, wherever he came, conspired in giving testimony to the wonderful sanctity of Pelagius. He resolved to return, to visit this holy anchoret once more, before he left the country; in order to receive some wholesome instructions from him. When he came to the cell, and knockt at the window; no one opened it to him: and when he called, no one answered: so that having continued for some time knocking and calling; he began to think the anchoret was gone away. At length he forced open the window; and looking in, he perceived the Saint was dead. He gave notice to the neighbouring religious, who came, and opening the cell, took out the body, in order to its being enterred, with all the honour due to so great a servant of God. And now the secret being discovered, and noised abroad, all the holy virgins, that dwelt in the monasteries of Jericho, and on the bank of the Jordan, in the place, where our Lord was baptised, came out with lighted candles in their hands, singing hymns and psalms, to meet the corpse of the Saint, which they conducted to their church; and there deposited as a rich treasure.

Her name is recorded in the Roman martyrology, on the eighth of October; and the name of St. Nonnus, on the second of December.



ST. M A R Y of Egypt.

From her life, written by S. Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem.

THERE was in a monastery of Palestine, a holy priest, called Zosimus, who from his childhood had dedicated himself to the love of God; and had spent three and fifty years in that community, in the exercises of a monastick life, with such perfection, as to be worthily admired by all that knew him. This good father, being one day tempted with a thought, as if nothing more were now wanting to him, as being already arrived, as he imagined, at the top of the hill of religious perfection; was admonished by one, appearing to him in the shape of a man, of the error, he was in; and was directed by this messenger of heaven to another monastery, more remote from all conversation with the world, and situated in a lonesome place, on the banks of the river Jordan, in order to his learning there still higher lessons in the school of religion. In this place, he found a company of Angels rather than men: so great was their fervour in all that related to the service of God. His divine praises were sung there, every hour of the night: and in the day, whilst their hands were employed in manual labours, the psalms were always in their mouths, and in their heart. Here was no room for any unprofitable conversation: they all made it their business, absolutely to forget the world, and all the things of the world; and to live as men, quite dead to all things else, but the *one thing necessary*. Their thoughts were continually taken up with heavenly truths; the emptiness and vanity of all such things as pass away with time, and the greatness of things eternal, were their constant meditation. Their greatest dainties for their corporal sustenance, were bread and water: but their souls
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were continually feasted with the word of God, and prayer.

It was the custom of these religious, every year on the first Sunday of lent, after assisting at the divine mysteries, and receiving the precious body and blood of our Lord, to go forth into the vast wilderness beyond the river, there to spend the holy time of lent, in perfect solitude; eating very seldom, and then only a few figs, or dates, which they carried with them, or such herbs, as grew wild in the desert; frequently singing psalms, and praying without ceasing. After spending, in this manner, the greatest part of the time of the fast, they all returned again to the monastery, to celebrate the passion and resurrection of our Lord: contriving always to meet there, against palm-Sunday. The holy man, Zosimus, according to the custom of the other monks, when lent came, crossed the river; designing to penetrate as far as he could into the heart of the desert, in hopes, as he afterwards said, of meeting there with some Saint, from whom he might receive instruction and edification. He took with him but slender provisions; and never eat but when he was forced to it by necessity. Where night found him, there he lay down on the earth, to take a little rest; and as soon as the day-light permitted, he hastened forward, as if he had been making the best of his way, towards some person of his acquaintance. Only he stopt for a while, at certain times of the day, to sing some psalms standing, and to spend some time in prayer on his knees.

He had travelled in this manner till about mid-lent; when one day stopping a little, at the sixth hour, and performing his usual prayers, turned towards the East, he perceived on his right hand the shadow, as it were, of a human body. Upon which being surprised, he made the sign of the cross, imagining, it might be an illusion of the enemy. But when he had finished his devotions, turning his eyes that way, he plainly saw

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a person walking hastily towards the West ; whose naked body was grown quite black, with the heat of the sun, and whose hair was turned as white as wool. Upon this sight, Zosimus was overjoyed, hoping, he had now found what he sought : and therefore he began to run, with all his strength, in order to overtake the person, whom he perceived to fly from him : and through his earnest desire of coming up to her, he continually gained ground of her ; till coming within hearing, he cried out, ‘ Servant of God, why do you fly from a sinner, and a poor old man ? Whoever you are, I conjure you, by that God, for whose sake you spend your days in this frightful desert, to let me come near you. I beg of you to stop a little, and not to refuse your blessing and prayers, to one who entreats you, in the name of that God, who never cast off any man, that desired to come to him. ’ Whilst he was thus calling after her, she arrived at a place, that had been made hollow, by the waters of a torrent ; but which was now dried up : and when she had passed over to the other side ; he not being able to follow her : she cried out to him ‘ Father Zosimus, I beseech you for God’s sake, excuse my not turning about to speak to you : because I am a woman, and quite naked. But if you are willing, to favour a poor sinner with your blessing, fling over your mantle, that I may cover myself with it, and then turn to you, and receive your benediction. ’

The holy man was struck with astonishment, to hear her call him by his name : which he was sensible she could not know, but by revelation. And therefore he readily complied with her desire, and threw his mantle over ; turning his back upon her, till she had covered herself with it. Which when she had done, she asked him, what had brought him so far, to see such a wretched sinner as she was ? Or what he could expect to know, or learn from her ? He having already a high opinion of her sanctity, instead of other answer, prostrated

strated himself upon the ground ; and as the custom of the religious was, when they visited one another, craved her blessing. No, father, said she, falling down upon her face, it is your part to bless, and to pray : for you are a priest : and having for so many years served the altar, are admitted to a greater grace and light of God, and to the sacred mysteries of Jesus Christ. Zosimus was still more astonished, to hear her speak of his being a priest ; and therefore venerating the Spirit of God in her, insisted the more upon her giving her blessing first ; and would not rise from the ground, till she had so far condescended, as to bless our Lord with these words : ‘ Blessed be the Lord, that worketh the salvation of souls’ : to which he answered, Amen : and so they both rose up. Then she began to enquire concerning the present state of Christendom ; and whether the church enjoyed peace ; and how the faithful behaved in their respective stations ? And Zosimus answered her, that God had doubtless heard her prayers, and had granted peace to his church. But, said he, I beseech you, in his name, not to refuse a poor unworthy monk, the comfort I ask for the love of Jesus Christ : which is, that you would at present offer up your prayers to him, for all the world, in general, and in particular for me a poor sinner ; that this long and painful journey, through this vast wilderness, may not prove unprofitable to me. She told him, it belonged rather to his function, to pray both for her, and for all the world : however as obedience was a duty incumbent on her ; she would comply with his command.

Then turning towards the East, with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, she prayed for a long time in silence : whilst Zosimus stood without saying a word, with his eyes cast down to the ground. But finding, that she continued very long in her prayer, he looked up a little, and saw that she was raised a cubit from the earth ; and prayed in that manner suspended in the air :

for the truth of which, he afterwards called God to witness. This sight caused in him so great a surprize and apprehension, that he threw himself upon the ground, all in a sweat, crying out *Lord have mercy on me*. His surprize was succeeded by a thought, that perhaps all this might be an illusion; and this appearance of a woman might be some evil spirit, that only pretended to pray. But she turned towards him; and answering this his thought, assured him, she was no spirit, but flesh and blood; and a poor sinful woman, made up of dirt and corruption. She added, that she had been baptized, and was a Christian. And then making the sign of the cross, upon her fore head, upon her eyes, upon her lips, and upon her stomach: she said: 'God deliver us, father, from the evil spirit, and from all his snares, and suggestions: for we know, that he bears us an implacable hatred.'

Then Zosimus entreated her, to tell him, who she was, whence she came, when and why she retired into this desert? And in a word, all that concerned her life there: and this for the glory of God; and for his instruction and edification: not doubting, as he told her, but that God had brought him into that desert, and enabled him, notwithstanding his great weakness and age, to make so long a journey, in so short a time, with no other design, than that the wonders, of his divine grace in her, might be made manifest, to the greater glory of his name. He added, that she needed not to apprehend any vain glory, in the recital of her life; since her motive would be no other than the glory of God, and the comfort and instruction of a poor sinner. She answered, that in regard to her life, there was indeed no room, for her taking any vanity, in the relating the history of it: since she had been a vessel of election, not of God, but of the devil. That she was even ready to die, with shame and confusion, to think of declaring all her infamous crimes: and that she apprehended, he would fly from her, as from a serpent,

pent, when he began to hear her history. However she was resolved to be quite sincere with him, and to declare the particulars of her infamous life: in hopes that he would never cease to pray for her, that she might find mercy at the last day.

And here she began to give him a relation of her life: that she was a native of Egypt, and had run away from her parents, when she was but twelve years old, and gone to Alexandria: where falling into bad company, she quickly lost her honour, and then abandoned herself to all kind of lewdness, as a publick prostitute, for the space of seventeen years. That at the end of this time, seeing a great many persons flocking towards the seashore, in order to be embarked for the Holy land; to celebrate there the feast of the exaltation of the cross, in Jerusalem; she had impudently thrust herself into their company; and both during the voyage, and after her arrival at Jerusalem, had made herself the devil's instrument, in drawing many into a partnership in her abominations. That when the day of the feast was come, she attempted to go in, with the rest of the people, into the church of the holy cross, but was repulsed by an invisible power; and though she made several efforts, and saw all others about her, going in with ease, and strove for her part, with all her might, to go in along with them, she could never advance, beyond the threshold; but found herself still thrust back into the porch. ' This happening to me, said she, three
' or four times — I began to consider, what might
' be the reason that I was thus debarred the sight of
' that life giving wood, of the holy cross. When a
' saving thought striking my mind, and opening
' the eyes of my soul, I concluded that it was the
' filthiness of my life that shut me out of the temple
' of God. Then all in tears, and in the utmost
' consternation of mind, I knocked my breast; I
' sighed, ready to break my heart; I cried, I la-

“ mented and mourned : till at last perceiving over
“ my head, in the place where I stood, the image
“ of the holy mother of God, I immediately ad-
“ dressed myself to her; and with my eyes fixed
“ on her picture, I said.” “O Virgin lady, who
“ hast brought forth God according to the flesh,
“ I know I am not worthy to venerate, or even
“ to look up at thy image, with these eyes of mine,
“ that have been defiled with so much uncleanness :
“ seeing thou art a most pure unspotted virgin
“ both in body and soul; and it is very just that
“ thy incomparable purity should abominate, and
“ drive away from thee so filthy a creature as I am.
“ Nevertheless having been taught, that the God,
“ whom thou wast worthy to bring forth, was made
“ man, in order to call sinners to penance : I beseech
“ thee to assist me, who am here left alone and
“ destitute of all help. O receive the confession I
“ here make of my sins; and give me leave to enter
“ into the church, that I may not be so unhappy,
“ as to be deprived of the sight of that precious
“ wood, to which that God man was fastened,
“ who was born of thee (without any prejudice to
“ thy virginity) and on which he spilt his blood for
“ my redemption. Ordain, O blessed lady, that
“ the door may be open to me, tho’ most unworthy,
“ that I may salute that divine cross : and be thou
“ pleased to be my surety to Christ thy Son, that I
“ shall never more defile myself with any of those
“ detestable uncleannesses ; and for my part, as soon
“ as I shall have seen, O holy Virgin, the tree
“ on which thy Son vouchsafed to die, I promise
“ absolutely to renounce the world, and all its wicked
“ ways; and to go away forthwith to the place, to
“ which thou, my surety, and my guide, shalt be
“ pleased to conduct me. So far her prayer to the
“ blessed Virgin.”

Then

Then proceeding in her relation, she declared how after having made this prayer and promise, she attempted again to go into the church; and found now no manner of obstacle; but with all ease, not only entered in, but also penetrated, notwithstanding the great crowd, as far as the sanctuary; and there was so happy as to see and venerate the precious, and life-giving wood, consecrated with the blood of our redeemer; and to be sensibly affected with the experience she now had of the inconceivable excess of God's mercy, in his readiness to receive penitent sinners. Full of these sentiments she prostrated herself upon the ground, and kissed the sacred pavement of the sanctuary: and then ran out to the place, where she had made her solemn promise to the blessed Virgin: and there kneeling down before her image, after giving thanks for that goodness and charity; she had already experienced, she offered herself to make good what she had promised; and begged of our blessed lady to direct her now to the place, to which she would have her to go, to do penance, for her sins. Upon this she heard a voice, as of one crying out at a distance: *If thou go beyond the Jordan, there thou shalt find a holy rest.* Which words she took as spoken to herself; and begging of our blessed lady not to forsake her, she got up in haste to follow this call. As she was going, she met with an unknown person, who gave her three pieces of money, with which she bought three loaves: and then having inquired of the baker the way that led to the river Jordan; she set out immediately upon the road, and did not stop till she arrived at the church of St. John the Baptist, upon the bank of the river. In this church she performed her devotions, and received the blessed sacrament: eating during her short stay there the half of one of her loaves, drinking of the water of the river, and using no other bed but the bare ground. On the morning

after her communion, she passed over to the other side of the river: 'and then, said she, I again
' prayed to my guide (the blessed Virgin) to conduct
' me to what ever place she pleased. And so I
' came into this desert: and from that time till this
' day (which I compute to be seven and forty years)
' I have according to the psalmist *kept my self far*
' *off, flying away* from all company, *and have abode*
' *in solitude* (Ps. 54.) looking for the mercy of my
' God, who saves both little and great, who are converted to him.'

Zosimus then enquired of her, what she had lived upon all that time? She answered that the two loaves and a half, which she had brought with her, were for a long time her only food; though they soon grew as hard as stones, so that she could eat but very little of them at a time: and that after they were consumed, she lived upon what few herbs she could find in the desert. That as for cloaths, those which she had brought over with her being quite worn out, she had been without any for the greatest part of the time, and had laboured under inexpressible difficulties, for the want of them: being broiled with excessive heats in the summer; and suffering the extremity of cold in the winter: but that under all these hardships and necessities, together with a multitude and variety of temptations, which she had to struggle with; she ever had experienced, to that very day, the power and goodness of God, in the many ways, that he had still preserved her poor soul and body. So that when she called to mind, from how many evils the Lord had delivered her, she was nourished and supported with a never failing food; and found a banquet, which satisfied all her appetite, in the hopes she entertained of her eternal salvation.

Zosimus desiring also to learn from her, more particulars, with relation to the conflicts, she must have

have sustained ; more especially upon her first entering on this new kind of life. She acknowledged that for the first seventeen years, she was in a manner under perpetual temptations. That she suffered much from hunger and thirst ; and was frequently attacked with vehement desires of the flesh-pots of Egypt : that she longed for wine, which she had formerly loved, and drunk to excess ; whereas now she could not even come at water : that the lascivious songs, she had formerly been accustomed to sing, were often coming into her mind ; and other impure suggestions disturbing her soul : and violently moving her to lust, but that upon perceiving any of these assaults, she used to strike her breast, shedding many tears ; and remembring the solemn engagement she had made, before she came into the wilderness ; placed herself in spirit before the image of the blessed Virgin, whom she had desired to be her surety ; and ceased not to lament, and to weep, and to beg of her protectress, to drive away from her those wicked thoughts, which troubled her poor soul, till after long and earnest prayer, accompanied with floods of tears, and with the bruising of her body with her blows ; she used to perceive a light shining round about her ; and a calm was restored to her soul. And thus, said she, ‘ I had always the eyes of my heart lifted up without ceasing to her, that was my surety, beseeching her to stand by me in my solitude and penance : and I always experienced the help and assistance of her, who brought forth the author of all purity : and so I passed safely through the many conflicts and dangers of those seventeen years. And from that time till now the blessed mother of God has never forsaken me ; but always, and in all things, has assisted, and directed me.

Zosimus hearkened with great attention to all that she said ; and taking notice that she had, in her relation of her life, made use of passages, taken out of
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the psalms, and other parts of the scripture ; he asked her, if she had ever learnt the psalms, or read any part of the holy scripture ? She told him, she could not read at all ; nor had so much as ever heard any person read or sing the psalms ; or ever seen either man or beast, from her coming into the desert till that day. ‘ But, said she, the Word of God, which is living
 ‘ and effectual, interiously teaches the understanding
 ‘ of man. And now as you have heard all that
 ‘ relates to me ; I conjure you by the incarnation of
 ‘ the Eternal Word, to pray for me, who as you see,
 ‘ have been so vile a sinner.’

Zosimus having heard all this, cast himself on his knees, and with a loud voice magnified our Lord, for the wonders of his goodness and mercy, to them that fear him, and seek him. And she on her part, begged of him, for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’s sake, that he would not speak of the things she had related to him to any one living, till God should deliver her out of the prison of the body : and, said she, ‘ about this time twelve month, by God’s grace,
 ‘ you shall see me again. I beg of you therefore for
 ‘ our Lord’s sake, that when the holy time of lent
 ‘ shall return, next year, you would not come over
 ‘ the Jordan, according to the custom of your mon-
 ‘ nastery ; but stay at home during that time : and
 ‘ indeed you shall not be able to go out, if you would :
 ‘ and that in the most sacred evening of our Lord’s last
 ‘ supper, you would bring out for me, in a holy ves-
 ‘ sel, worthy of so great a mystery, the divine body
 ‘ and life-giving blood of our Saviour : and wait for
 ‘ me, on that side of the river, which you inhabit :
 ‘ and I shall come, and receive those precious gifts,
 ‘ that are the life of the soul — at the very hour, in
 ‘ which our Lord imparted that divine supper to his
 ‘ disciples.’ Having said this, and once more begged the holy father to pray for her, she hastened away into the remoter parts of the wilderness. And Zosi-
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mus, after casting himself down upon the ground, and kissing the earth upon which she had stood, returned through the desert, the same way he came, and arrived in due time at the monastery.

During the following year, he kept to himself all he had seen and heard; longing for the return of lent, that he might be once more blessed with the sight and conversation of one, whom he justly held in the highest veneration. When the holy fast of lent was come, he was visited with a fever, which, as the Saint had foretold, disabled him from going abroad into the desert with the rest of the brethren; but was of no further consequence. Wherefore on Maundy-Thursdai in the evening, in compliance with what she had desired of him, he carried out, in a small chalice, the sacred body and precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the bank of the river, and there waited for her coming, looking attentively towards the desert, in expectation of what he had so great a desire of seeing: but not without an apprehension, as she was somewhat long before she came, lest she might have been there already, and not finding him, might have gone back again. Another thought also occurred to his mind, and gave him pain: which was, in case of her coming, how she should pass over the river to him; for there was neither bridge nor boat in that place. Whilst the holy old man was in this perplexity of thought, he discovered the Saint on the opposite bank of the Jordan, by the light of the moon, which was then at the full; and saw her making the sign of the cross upon the river, and presently after walking upon the water, as if it had been firm ground, and coming towards him. With which sight he was so much astonished, that he was going to cast himself upon his knees; had she not stopped him, by crying out. ‘Father, what are you doing? Remember
‘you

‘ you are a priest of God, and carry with you the
‘ divine mysteries.

Being now come over the river, she craved his blessing; and after desiring him to recite the creed and the Lord’s prayer, she received at his hands the blessed sacrament. After which lifting up her hands to heaven, sighing and weeping, she cried out: ‘ Now
‘ dost thou dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according
‘ to thy word in peace: because my eyes have seen
‘ thy salvation.’ Then turning to the old man, she desired him to pardon the trouble she had given him; and for the present to return to the monastery: but in the following lent, not to fail to come to the place, where she had first spoken to him; and that there he should see her again, in the manner, God should be pleased to ordain. Zosimus desired her to eat something; having brought with him for that purpose in a basket some figs and dates, with some lentiles steeped in water. She took a few grains of the lentiles, saying, she had no occasion for any more; and that the grace of the Spirit was sufficient to preserve the soul in its purity. Then begging of him again for God’s sake to pray for her, and never to forget her miseries; whilst he on his part recommended himself, and the whole church to her prayers; she took her leave of him, and making the sign of the cross upon the river, crossed it again, in the same manner as she came, walking upon the waters.

The next year, Zosimus going out in lent, according to the custom of the monastery, into the desert, made the best of his way towards the place where he had first seen the Saint, in hopes of being still more and more edified, by her sight, and heavenly conversation; and of learning also her name; which he regretted his not having inquired after, when he saw her last. When after a long and painful journey, he arrived at the dry torrent, he found in the higher part of that concavity, the dead body of the Saint,
extended

extended decently on the ground, with the hands crossed, and the face turned towards the east. He fell down at the feet of the holy corpse, and washed them with his tears: and then began to sing the psalms, and recite the prayers, for the burial of the dead. When behold he perceived on the ground these words written in the sand: ‘ Father Zosimus; ‘ bury the body of poor Mary: render to the earth ‘ what belongs to the earth: and in the name of ‘ God pray for me, on the ninth day of April, the ‘ day of the passion of our Lord, after the communion of the divine supper.’ The old man reading these words could not conceive who should write them: seeing the Saint had assured him she could neither read nor write. However he was pleased to have found out her name: but astonished to think how quickly she had been brought back, after receiving the holy communion, in one night, as much space of ground, as had taken him up twenty days, travelling without ceasing: and that immediately after her return, her soul had left her body, and taken its flight to heaven.

But now his solicitude was, how he should execute what was desired of him, and bury her body; for he had no proper instrument to open the earth, or make a grave. But he was not long under this perplexity, before he perceived a huge lion standing by the body of the Saint, and licking her feet. He was terrified at first with the sight; but making the sign of the cross, he recovered himself; trusting that the holy body would protect him from all dangers. Besides he found the lion began to fawn upon him, as if he proffered him his service. So that being convinced, God had sent the beast, to make a grave for his servant, he commanded him in God’s name to set about that work, with his claws. The lion obeyed, and presently made a sufficient grave; in which Zosimus entered the Saint’s body, covered
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only with the mantle, she had received of him : and with many tears, he recommended both himself and the whole world to her prayers : and then departed, praising God : whilst the lion, like a tame lamb, went his way also into the remoter parts of the desert. Zosimus at his returning home, related to his brethren the whole history of the life of the Saint from the beginning, to the great edification of them all ; concealing no part of what he had seen and heard. After which he still continued serving and glorifying God in that monastery, till he was a hundred years old : and this with such perfection, as to be enrolled after his death amongst the Saints. His name occurs in the Roman martyrology, on the fourth of April ; and that of St. Mary of Egypt, on the second of the same month.



A collection of remarkable sayings, actions and examples of the eastern solitaries: extracted out of ancient ecclesiastical writers.

*Out of the third book of the lives of the fathers,
by Rufinus.*

I.

AN ancient father said to his disciples: we must hate the repose of this present life, the pleasures of the body, and the gratifying its appetites; and must not seek at all the honour that is from man: and then the Lord Jesus will give us the honour and glory of heaven, the repose of eternal life, and never ending joys, with his Angels.

II.

An ancient father lived many years an anchorite in the heart of the wilderness, in the practice of extraordinary abstinences and continual labours: some brethren coming to him one day, and admiring his patience and perseverance; asked him how he was able to endure, so many and such great sufferings, as he was obliged to go through, in that dry and frightful solitude? O brethren, said he, all the labours and sufferings of all the years I have been here, are not comparable to one hour of suffering in hell's flames. Wherefore, in order to escape these, we must be willing to undergo the hardships and labours of this short time of our mortal life; and to mortify ourselves here, that we may find a never ending rest hereafter, in the happy eternity of the world to come.

III.

A certain religious hermite, lived a recluse and penitential life, near the suburbs of Constantinople,

ple, where he had a little cell, from which he never stirred out. Theodosius the emperor, having heard of this servant of God, desiring to see him, went to his cell one day all alone, and knockt at the door. The hermit let him in, and according to the custom of the religious in their visits, they first made their prayer together, and then sat down. The emperor enquired of him, concerning the way of living of the holy fathers in Egypt, and their employments. They all pray, said the hermit, for your salvation. Theodosius looked about to see what he had in his cell: and discovering nothing but some dry bread in a basket, he said: father, give me your benediction, and let us refresh ourselves together. The hermit put some salt into water, and then soaked the dry bread in it, of which they made their meal together: and when they had done, he presented the emperor with a cup of water. Theodosius said to him: Do you know who I am? God knows who you are, said the hermit. 'I am Theodosius the emperor, said he, and I came hither to be edified by you. O how happy are you solitaries, who being altogether free, and disengaged from the cares and occupations of the world, enjoy a calm and quiet life; having no other solicitude, but for the salvation of your souls; and no other thoughts, but how you may make yourselves worthy of the heavenly rewards of that life, and kingdom to come, that knows no end. But I, though born to the purple, and seated on the imperial throne, declare to you in truth, that I never sit down to my meals, without having some cares upon my mind' Having said this, and testified a great deal of honour and esteem for the servant of God, he went his way. But the hermit immediately began to think with himself, that in consequence of this visit from the emperor, a great number of others of all conditions, and even of the courtiers and senators, would be coming

coming to interrupt his devotions; and apprehending withal, lest he should come to take a complacency in their visits, and in the honours they would shew him; and so fall, by degrees, into the nets of satan, by pride and vain-glory; in order to secure himself from the danger, he departed that very night, and made the best of his way into Egypt; where he associated himself with the holy fathers of the Egyptian deserts.

IV.

Amongst the other holy inhabitants of the deserts of Egypt, there was an ancient anchoret named Agatho; who was much admired for his extraordinary patience and humility. Some of the brethren, who had a mind to make a trial of him, went one day to his cell; and complained to him of the scandal he gave by his pride, and self-conceit; and by his despising of others, and setting them at naught; and taking the liberty to censure and detract them; and this, said they, because being vicious yourself, and given to lewdness, you think to cloake your own vices by charging them upon others. The holy man heard all they said, without shewing the least emotion, or disturbance of soul; or denying any part of the charge: on the contrary, casting himself at their feet, he confessed himself to be indeed a very grievous sinner; and begged of them, they would be so charitable, as to interceed to our Lord, for such a poor miserable wretch, loaded with so many crimes; to the end he might obtain mercy, and forgiveness of his great and manifold sins, by the assistance of their prayers. But, said they, we must tell you moreover, that some people say, you are also a heretick. O no, said the Saint, however wretched I am, in other regards, and however guilty of innumerable other sins, I am not so miserable as to give up my share in Jesus Christ, by heresy. Far

be this from my soul ! Then all these brethren casting themselves at his feet, desired to know of him ; why he, who had suffered without the least emotion or resistance, so many other false accusations, had shewed so much horror, and so great a repugnance to his being accused of heresy ? He answered, that as to the other accusations, it was the part of humility, to love to be despised ; and to be willing to pass for a grievous sinner : to bear also with reproaches, and calumnies, by the example of Jesus Christ himself, who suffered in silence such treatment as this from the Jews, for our instruction. But that there was a particular enormity, and malignity in heresy (which is an obstinate opposition to the revealed truths of God) by means of which, it separates the soul, in such manner, from Jesus Christ, as to destroy the very foundation of salvation, which is faith ; and gives her up to the devil, as it were, without reserve. And therefore, as no one ought to be willing to pass for an obstinate enemy of Jesus Christ, or of any of his revealed truths, no one ought to be willing to pass for a heretick.

V.

There was, in a certain monastery of Egypt, a monk named Eulalius, endowed in an extraordinary degree with the grace of humility. Now as in that numerous community, there were not wanting divers lukewarm brethren, who were guilty of frequent faults, and negligences ; particularly in breaking, or destroying the earthen vessels, or other utensils of the monastery ; they were accustomed to lay all these faults upon Eulalius, whom they found ever ready to bare the blame of them. The superiors often took him to task on these occasions : and he instead of pleading *not guilty*, prostrated himself before them, and begged pardon for his faults and negligences. The rule of the monastery enjoined penances for these faults,

faults, which he chearfully underwent, even to the passing often two or three days together, without eating. But as fresh accusations still were brought against him, the ancient religious (who knew not that he endured all this for Christ's sake, for an exercise of his patience and humility) represented to the abbot, that as they found no amendment, it would be necessary to think of taking some other course with this Eulalius: for that by his negligences, most of the utensils of the house were already destroyed; and that there would be no keeping any thing whole in the monastery as long as he was there. The abbot desired some time to consider on't: and in the mean while begging light from God, he learnt of him in prayer the merit of Eulalius, and his great patience and humility: which his divine Majesty was also pleased, not long after, to declare by a miracle, in the presence of all the religious. Upon this the brethren began to esteem him as a Saint; and to honour and praise him as such, on all occasions: which was a sensible mortification to this humble servant of God: insomuch that he heavily complained of his misfortune, in having now lost, as he said, the treasure of humility, which by the grace of Christ, he had for so long a time been labouring to acquire. At length, to fly from all this honour and esteem, he withdrew himself privately by night from the monastery into a desert, where he might be unknown to all men; and there chose a lonesome cave for his habitation: in which he spent the remainder of the days of his mortality; in order to secure his humility from the dangers, it is usually exposed to, in the midst of applause and esteem.

VI.

A certain solitary came one day to the monastery of abbot Silvanus, on mount Sina; and finding the brethren all at work, said to them, *Why are you*

labouring for the meat that perisheth: did not *Mary choose the better part*? The abbot turning to his disciple Zacharias, bid him give that brother a book, and conduct him to an empty cell. When the hour came, at which the monks used to take their meal (which was about three in the afternoon) the stranger was looking out, expecting that the abbot would send for him to the refectory: but finding that the hour was passed, and no one came to call him: he went and asked the abbot, if the monks did not dine that day? He told him, yes, they had dined: but that as for his part, they had not sent for him; because they understood he was a *spiritual* man, and had no need of *the meat that perisheth*: whereas they being carnal, and having need of it, were under a necessity of labouring for it. But you, said he, have *chosen with Mary the better part*, by reading all the day long, without requiring this carnal food. The brother begged pardon, and acknowledged his error: upon which the abbot desired him to remember, that as Martha wanted the assistance of Mary, so Mary could not do alone, without the help of Martha.

VII.

Abbot Moses said, that as when a general besieges a city of the enemies, he endeavours to hinder any provisions being brought to the besieged; to the end that through hunger and want, they may be obliged to deliver up their city: so the man that desires to overcome his carnal passions, must starve them out, by fasting and abstinence.

VIII.

A certain religious man having received an injury from another, came to complain of it to one of the ancient fathers. The old man bid him, on this and the like occasions, to think with himself, that the injury, or affront, was not levelled at him, but at his
sins,

sins : and advised him to sit down contented, and to say, *all this is for my sins.*

IX.

Another good brother, when any persons affronted him, scoffed at him, or injured him ; used to rejoice, and to say ; these are my friends, who are giving me an opportunity of advancing in virtue : whereas they that extol and applaud us, are rather our enemies ; according to that of Isaiah iii. 12. *O my people, they that call thee blessed, the same deceive thee, and destroy the way of thy steps.*

X.

A brother asked an ancient father, to give him one short prescription, which if he observed, he might be saved. The father told him, the best prescription he could give for the security of his soul, was to overcome himself so far as to bear, with meekness and silence, the greatest injuries and reproaches.

XI.

St. Macarius said : He that overcomes himself in all things, it is he that is a monk indeed. For if a person, whilst he corrects or rebukes another for his faults, suffers himself to be moved to anger, he is only gratifying his own passion. No one ought to lose his own soul, whilst he pretends to save another.

XII.

The abbot Silvanus, being asked by certain brethren, to speak something for their edification, desired his disciple Zacharias to give them a lesson. The disciple taking off his outward habit, laid it upon the ground, and stampt with his feet upon it, saying : No one can be truly a religious man, that is not willing to be troden under foot in this manner.

XIII.

Some of the brethren extolled, in the hearing of St. Antony, the virtues of one of the monks: but the Saint having taken a trial of him, found that he could not bear an injury. Upon which the man of God told him, that he was like a building, which had a beautiful front before, but lay open behind to thieves and robbers.

XIV.

One of the fathers said: all the labour of a monk, without humility, is vain. For humility is the fore runner of charity; as John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ, drawing all to him: for in like manner humility draws men to charity; that is, to God himself: *for God is charity*, 1. John iv.

XV.

St. Antony saw one day, in a vision, the whole earth as a large field, covered on every side with the nets and snares of the enemy. Upon which fighting, he cried out, who shall be able to pass, or escape all these? Immediately he heard an answer. *Humility alone can pass secure.*

XVI.

A monk in a certain monastery having committed a fault, for which he was severely rebuked by the rest of the brethren, went away to the cell of St. Antony. The brethren followed him thither, in order to bring him back; and warmly upbraided him with his faults, in the presence of the Saint; which he on his part as warmly denied. There happened to be there at that time the holy abbot Paphnucius, surnamed Cephalas, who to put a stop to the contention, said by way of a parable: 'I was standing one day on the bank of the river; and I saw there a man, that was sunk into the mire up to

‘ to the knees : and behold there came some other
‘ men, stretching out their hands, as it were, to help
‘ him out; but instead of drawing him out, they
‘ pushed him further in, even up to the neck. St.
‘ Antony hearing the parable, and approving the
‘ thought, said of St. Paphnucius : Behold a man,
‘ who has the right notion of the way of reclaiming
‘ the faulty, and of saving their souls.’ The brethren
presently took the hint ; and begging pardon for their
heat, received the brother, in the tender bowels of
the mercy of Jesus Christ.

XVII.

St. Pemen (alias Pastor) gave this as a rule to his
disciples : ‘ Never do your own will : but rather
‘ humble yourselves, to do the will of your neigh-
‘ bours.

XVIII.

A certain anchoret dwelt in a cave, not far from
a religious community, in great abstinence, and
sanctity of life. One day some of the monks, com-
ing to visit him, obliged him to eat before his time :
and when they had done so, they asked him, if it
was no pain or trouble to him, to be put thus out
of his way, by eating contrary to his custom ? He
answered, that never any thing gave him pain or
trouble, but the following his own will.

XIX.

The holy abbot Agatho, coming one day into the
next city, to sell his work, found there a certain stran-
ger, lying in a by corner very sick ; who had no man
at all to take any care of him. The servant of God,
seeing this object of charity, instead of returning back
to the wilderness, hired himself a lodging in the city, to
which he carried the sickman ; and there attended on
him, for the space of four months ; working in the

mean time with his own hands, for the procuring him all necessaries : after which, the sick man being now perfectly recovered, the Saint returned home again to his cell.

XX.

An ancient servant of God, seeing his disciple sick, bid him be of good comfort, and to return thanks to God for this visitation. ‘ For, said he, if thou art but iron, the *fire* will serve to take the rust away from thee ; and if thou art gold, it will refine thee, and purify thee.’ Don’t be uneasy then, my dear brother ; for since it hath pleased God to send thee this sickness, who art thou, that thou shouldst grieve or repine at his doings ? O rather suffer all, with patience and resignation : and let thy only prayer be, that God would do his will in thee.

XXI.

An ancient religious, who was frequently visited with sicknesses, happened to pass one whole year without any illness. Upon which occasion he wept, and grieved very much : saying to our Lord in prayer ; Lord, thou hast forsaken me ; for thou hast not once visited me all this year. This holy man had a right notion of the inestimable value of patient sufferings.

XXII.

When the holy abbot Agatho was drawing near to his end, he lay for three days with his eyes fixed, in silence. Some of the brethren, touching him, said : Father, where are you now ? He answered, I am standing before the judgment seat of God. Why, said they, are you also afraid ? According to my power, said he, I have always endeavoured to keep the commandments of my God : but I am a poor frail mortal, and how do I know, whether my works are pleasing to God or no ? And do you not trust,
said

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said they, that your works are according to God? I dare not trust to my works, said he, in the sight of God: for the judgment of God is very different from the judgment of men.

XXIII.

A certain brother asked one of the fathers, how the soul might attain to humility? He answered, if she think only of her own evils, and not of those of others.

XXIV.

The abbot Pemen said, that nothing gave so much pleasure to the enemy, as when a person will not discover his temptations to his superior or director.

XXV.

A certain father said, that as the flies don't come near a pot, which is boiling hot; but sit upon such things as are only lukewarm, and leave their maggots there. So the devils are kept at a distance, by such religious, as are quite fervent in the love and service of God; but have a great power over such as are but lukewarm, to delude them, and to corrupt them with sin.

XXVI.

An ancient father gave the following lesson to his disciple: ' Every day, said he, think that the hour of thy death is at hand: and, as if thou wert already shut up in thy tomb, have no care at all for this world. Let the fear of God continually abide with thee at every hour. Believe thyself to be inferior to every one. Speak no evil of any one living, because God knows all things: and be at peace with all men: and the Lord shall give thee rest at all times.

XXVII.

XXVII.

Abbot John used to say, that a religious man ought to be like one sitting under a tree, who perceiving any wild beast, or serpent coming towards him, climbs up the tree, that he may be out of their reach : for just so a religious man, sitting in his cell, and perceiving any evil thoughts coming upon him, in order to secure himself against the danger, ought to ascend up to God by the tree of prayer.

XXVIII.

Some of the brethren came one day to visit the holy abbot Lucius : who enquired of them, what kind of work they followed ? They told him, they did not work ; but that according to the Apostle, they *prayed without ceasing*. But do you not eat, said the father ? and do you not sleep ? And who prays for you then ? To which they made no reply. Now, said he, I will tell you the manner, in which I endeavour to *pray without ceasing*, and yet never fail to work with my hands. For all the time I am making baskets, or cords, or the like, I am saying to my God : *Have mercy on me O God according to thy great mercy : and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity*. And when I have finished my work, I find means, out of the price of it, to give some part to the poor servants of Christ ; to engage them thereby to pray for the forgiveness of my sins, even whilst I am eating, or sleeping. And thus they, by praying for me, help to make my prayer continual, and without ceasing.

XXIX.

A certain young man, desirous to embrace a monastick life, was kept from it for some time by his mother. But as he still continued, begging her to let him go, and often repeating that he was resolved

solved to save his soul. At length she consented to his entering into a monastery. Being admitted to the habit of religion, he was a stranger to the spirit of religion, and led for many years a very tepid and negligent life. His mother in the mean time died : and he soon after falling grievously sick, lay for a while in a trance, as if he had been dead. In this trance, he seemed to himself to be carried to judgment, where he met with his mother, amongst others, who were expecting there the sentence of condemnation. And how now, said she to him, my son, art thou also brought hither, to receive with us the sentence of damnation ? And what is become of that fine saying of thine, which thou so often repeatedst : that thou wast resolved to save thy soul ? The horror and confusion that oppressed him, upon hearing this reproach from his mother, was inexpressible : and in this plight he seemed to himself to stand, as upon the brink of hell ; till he heard a voice, ordering that he should be sent back again, as not being the person called for ; and that such another, of a neighbouring monastery, that was one of the same name, should be brought thither. Upon this he came to himself, and related to those about him all he had seen and heard : and desired that some one of them would presently go, and enquire in the neighbouring monastery, if that other brother was departed this life. They found upon enquiry that he was just then dead : which confirmed them in their belief of the truth of what he had related. As to his part, he was no sooner recovered of his sickness, but he shut himself up in his cell ; and there gave himself in such manner to the care of his salvation, as to think now of nothing else ; but only night and day to weep, and do penance for his former negligences and sins. Some of the brethren advised him to be more moderate in his tears, (and other penances) for fear of hurting his health, by the greatness of his compunction.

punction. But he went on with his penitential labours to the end; telling them upon these occasions: If I could not bear the reproach, which I heard from my mother; how shall I be able to endure the reproaches of Christ and his Angels, in the day of judgment?

XXX.

A certain monk, in the desarts of Egypt, had a sister that followed a very wicked course of life in the city, where she drew many into sin. The other religious perswaded him, to go, and look after her, in order to reclaim her from her wickedness, and to deliver the souls of many others, who were ensnared by her beauty. When he came near the place, where she lived; one that knew him, ran and told her, that her brother was come from the desert to visit her. Upon hearing this she left her company; and presently went out with joy to meet him; and offered to salute him: but he kept her off; and earnestly besought her, to have pity on her soul: remonstrating to her the dreadful state she was in; and the dismal consequences she had to apprehend for eternity, if she did not immediately turn to God: and this in so feeling and effectual a manner, that she was seized all with a trembling: and asked him, if there could be any hopes of salvation for her? And if it was not now too late, to think of her turning to God? He assured her it was not; provided she would be quite in earnest, in her applications to the divine mercy, by true penance. She flung herself therefore at his feet, and begged of him, that he would take her along with him into the desert; where she might do penance for her sins. Go then, said he, and cover your head (for she had run forth to meet him barehead) and then come along with me. O brother, said she, let us make no delay: 'tis better for me to suffer the disgrace of going barehead, than to enter in any more into that house, which has been the

the shop of my iniquities. They made therefore the best of their way towards the desert, the brother preaching penance to her all the way they went: till seeing some of the brethren coming towards them, he desired her to step aside, and keep at some distance, for fear of any one's taking scandal from seeing a woman in his company; for all men, said he, don't know that you are my sister. She did so: and when the brethren were gone by; he went to look after her, and found her lying on the ground dead; with her feet all bloody, for she had walked all the way barefoot. He lamented her death; and went and related to the ancient religious, all that had happened. These servants of God were at a loss, what judgment they should make with regard to her soul; dying, as she did, after such a sinful life, without any time to do penance. But one of them learnt by revelation; that as she had left all she had in the world; and took no care for any thing else but the healing the wounds of her soul; and had wept and greatly lamented for her sins; the divine goodness had accepted of this her penance, and had shewed her mercy.

Out of the fifth book of the lives of the fathers, by an ancient ecclesiastical writer, translated from the Greek into Latin, by Pelagius deacon of Rome, who was made pope anno 558.

XXXI.

WHEN the holy abbot John, surnamed the dwarf, was near his end; his disciples entreated him, to leave them by way of a legacy, some short wholesom lesson, of Christian perfection. He sighed and said to them: *I never followed my own will: nor did I ever teach any other, what I had not first practised my self.*

XXXII.

XXXII.

Abbot Sifois being asked, which was the way to the peace and rest of the soul? replied: 'Be contentible in your own eyes: cast your pleasures behind your back: and be free, from all worldly cares; and you shall find rest.'

XXXIII.

Another holy man prescribed for this end the following precepts: 'Pray always to God that he may give you compunction and humility: think always on your own sins; and don't judge others: be subject, and obedient to all (yet so as to avoid familiarity with women, or boys, or hereticks) have no confidence at all in yourselves: restrain your tongue, and your sensual appetite: contend with no man: contradict no man in discourse: and your mind shall be at peace.'

XXXIV.

A certain brother came to abbot Moses in the desert of Scete, to beg of him a word of Instruction. Go, said the Saint, and keep thyself recollected in thy cell: and thy cell shall teach thee all things.

XXXV.

Some brethren, going from Scete to visit St. Antony, entered into a boat, which was to carry them part of their way up the Nile. In the boat they found an oldman, a stranger to them, who was also going to St. Antony. They were entertaining one another, all the way, with discourses upon different subjects; whilst the oldman was sitting in silence and recollection. When they came to land, as they found that the old man was going likewise to St. Antony, they went along with him. St. Antony told them, they had met with a good companion, in that servant of God. And you, said he,
father,

father, speaking to the old man, have found good company. ' He answered: I believe they are good: ' but they have no door to their dwelling: and ' whosoever has a mind goes into the stable, and ' takes out the beast, and rides upon it.' Which he said, because they were not recollected; and had no guard upon their tongue: but uttered whatever came into their mind.

XXXVI.

An ancient religious seeing another laugh, said to him: we must by and by appear before the great Lord of heaven and earth, to give a strict account of our whole lives; and can you laugh?

XXXVII.

A certain gentleman came one day, to the church of the wilderness of Scete, with a bag of money; which he desired the priest, the superior, to distribute amongst the brethren. The priest told him, they did not want it. But as the gentleman was very pressing; and would not be contented, except he would receive it; he put the money into a basket, and set it in the entry of the church; and cried out to the brethren: if any one wants, let him here take what he wants. Now there was not one of them all that would touch it: and some of them would not even so much as look on it. So the priest said to the gentleman: sir, our Lord has accepted of your offering; go now and give it to the poor: and thus he sent him away, much edified with their disinterestedness.

XXXVIII.

One brought a sum of money to a brother, who was a leper: saying, take, and keep this, for your own use: because you are old and infirm. The old-man answered: would you then deprive me, sir, of my nursing

nursing father, who has fed me these threescore years? Behold for so long a time, notwithstanding my infirmity, I have never wanted: for God has always provided for me: and therefore I will not distrust him now.

XXXIX.

The brethren desired one of the ancient fathers, to remit something of his great labours and austerities. He answered them: believe me, my children, I am of opinion, that Abraham himself, when he saw the greatness of the eternal rewards of heaven, was sorry he had not laboured, more than he did, when he was here upon earth.

XL.

A certain hermite had his cell in the wilderness, at the distance of twelve miles from any water. One day, as he was going for water, he found himself quite tired out, and spent with the journey: so that he was blaming himself, for taking so much unnecessary pains; and thinking he would change his abode, and make himself a cell, near the spring. Whilst he had this in mind, he heard one behind him, numbring his steps: and turning about, he saw an Angel, who told him he was commissioned from heaven, to take an account of all those laborious steps of his: which should all be rewarded. This vision encouraged the old man; and made him not only give up his design of fixing his habitation near the water; but also determined him to remove his cell to a still greater distance; since the divine goodness was pleased in this manner to count, and to reward all his steps.

XLI.

There was an ancient hermite in Thebais, who lived in a cave; and had with him a virtuous young man, his disciple. Now it was his custom every evening,

to

to make an exhortation to the young man, for his instruction, direction, and advancement in virtue and piety: after which they spent some time together in prayer; and then the old man gave him his blessing, and sent him to bed. One day the servant of God had entertained some visitors with discourses of piety, till late in the day: so that after their departure, whilst he was making his exhortation, as usual, to his disciple, he fell fast asleep. The brother staid in the place, looking for the father's awaking, that they might make their prayer, according to custom, before he went to bed. But the old man slept on so sound, that he did not awake till after midnight. In the mean time the young man, finding he slept so long, and being wearied and sleepy himself, was strongly tempted to leave him, and to go to bed: but he resisted the temptation, and continued to stay with him. A little after, the temptation returned again, and was very troublesome to him: but he got the better of it again, and drove it away: and thus was he violently assaulted seven different times; but still overcame the temptation; and forced himself to stay, till his master awaked. After midnight the old father awaking, and finding the young disciple with him, asked him: why he was not gone to bed? Because, said he, you had not discharged me. Why then, said the father, did you not waken me? I did not presume, said he, to disturb you. Wherefore rising up, they began their matins, or midnight office together, it being now the time; and when they had finished, the old father sent his disciple to take his rest. After he was gone, the old man sitting by himself, fell into a trance or extasy: when an unknown person shewed him a glorious place, in which there was a throne, and over the throne seven crowns; and told him, that place and throne was destined by our Lord for his disciple, as a reward of his virtue and piety: and

that as for those seven crowns, he had purchased them that very night. In the morning, the father asked his disciple, what he had done that night? Who answered, that he had done nothing particular. But he insisted still upon his telling him, all that had passed, that night, even to his very thoughts; till he assured him, he knew of nothing at all, except it was that he had been seven times strongly tempted to leave him, whilst he continued sleeping, and to go away to bed; but as he had not been discharged by him, according to custom, he had forced himself to stay. And thus the old man came to understand, that every victory over oneself, purchases a crown from God: and how much it imports to overcome ourselves, even in small matters.

XLII.

St. Antony was told one day of a young religious man, who was already so far favoured with miraculous gifts, that the very wild beasts of the desert obeyed him. The Saint, apprehending some ostentation and pride, in the manner of his proceeding: said on this occasion: that monk seems to me to resemble a ship richly laden, which is in danger of being shipwrecked, before it reaches the haven. Not long after, the Saint being in company with some of his disciples, began all on a sudden to weep and lament: and being asked the reason of his mourning, he cried out: Oh! a great pillar of the church is just now fallen: go ye and look after such a one, naming the young religious man. They went, and found him in a most melancholly way, for having just then committed a mortal sin: but he begged, they would desire their holy father, to obtain for him, by his prayers, a reprieve of ten days; that in that time, he might make satisfaction for his crime. But this was not granted him: for within five days, he was called away out of this life.

XLIII.

XLIII.

A certain brother came to visit the holy abbot Serapion : who begged of him, as it was usual amongst the ancient religious, in their visits, to give out the prayer, which was to be made, when they first met ; but he refused it, saying he was a poor sinner, and unworthy to wear the religious habit. In like manner, when the Saint would have washed his feet, according to the custom, he would not suffer him : but still alledged his own great unworthiness. The holy man entertained him at table with what his cell could afford : and at the same time gave him some charitable advice, saying : ‘ My son, if you desire to make due progress in religion, stay at home in your cell ; and there attend to God, and to yourself ; and employ yourself in working with your hands : for coming abroad in this manner is not so good for you, as it would be to keep close to your cell.’ The brother hearing these words, was disturbed, and offended with them ; and shewed his displeasure and resentment in the change of his countenance. Which the holy abbot taking notice of, said to him : ‘ A little while ago, you said you was a poor sinner : and accused yourself as one, that was not worthy to tread upon the earth : how then is it, that you are disturbed, and stomach so much at a charitable admonition, that I have given you ? If you have a true desire to be humble indeed, you must learn to bear manfully, the things that others lay upon you ; and not to be saying reproachful things of yourself ; which you would not be willing another should say, or believe of you.’ The brother acknowledged his fault : and departed highly edified with the lessons he received from the Saint.

XLIV.

The holy abbot Moses was told that the judge of the province (who had heard of his eminent sanctity)

was coming to visit him, in his cell, in the desert of Scete. To shun this visit, the man of God leaving his cell, retired towards the Marsh. In his way he met the judge with his train : who not knowing him, inquired of him, where the cell of abbot Moses was ? Why do you inquire, said he, after that worthless wretch ? He is one that is void both of sense and religion. The judge upon this, went to the church ; and there told the clergy, that he came into the desert, on purpose to visit abbot Moses, to be edified by his conversation : but that he had met with an old man, who had given him a very vile character. Pray, sir, said they, what sort of a person was that, who gave so bad a character to that holy man ? He was, said the judge, a tall black old man, and his habit was very much worn. It was abbot Moses himself, said they, who spoke thus of himself ; to avoid being visited, and honoured by you. Which the judge hearing, departed very much edified with the Saint's humility. This was that Moses, who had formerly been a captain of a band of robbers : who after his conversion, became not only an illustrious penitent, but so eminent in all virtue and sanctity, as to be raised to the dignity of priest, and superior of the holy solitaries of Scete ; and after his death to be enrolled amongst the Saints. See the Roman martyrology August 28.

XLV.

A brother had committed a fault, for which he was expelled the convent of abbot Elias : wherefore he went away to St. Antony, on his mountain ; and after staying a while with him, was sent back by him to the convent. The brethren refused to receive him : wherefore he returned again to St. Antony. The Saint sent him back again a second time, with this message : ‘ A ship was cast away at sea, and
‘ has lost all its cargo ; but with much ado the empty
‘ vessel

‘ vessel has been drawn to the shore: and would you, my brethren, after it has been thus brought to land, go and sink it out right?’ The brethren understanding the meaning of the Saint, presently complied with it; and received the brother again into their congregation.

XLVI.

Another brother had fallen into some sin; on account of which the priest bid him go out of the church. Whereupon the abbot Besarion, who was present, rose up, and went out with him; saying: I am a Sinner as well as he. This was the great Besarion, of whose extraordinary sanctity, and wonderful miracles, there is frequent mention in ancient monuments: whose name is recorded in the Roman martyrology amongst the Saints, on the seventeenth of June.

XLVII.

A certain priest used to come, from time to time, to the cell of a servant of God, who lived in the wilderness, to celebrate mass for him, and to administer to him the blessed sacrament. Now it happened, that this good hermite heard an ill report concerning the priest; and thereupon, the next time he came, he shut his door against him, and sent him away. Which he had no sooner done, but he heard a voice, saying: ‘ Men have taken away the judgment, that belongs to me, and have arrogated it to themselves.’ After which he was in a kind of extasy or trance: in which he saw a well all of gold, full of most clear and excellent water; with a golden chain, and a golden bucket, to draw up the water in: he saw also a leper, drawing some of this water, and pouring it out of the bucket into a clean vessel. Now he seemed to himself desirous of drinking of it; only he had a repugnance to it, because it was drawn by the leper. Whereupon he thought he heard a voice,

which said to him : ‘ Why do’st thou not drink of
 ‘ this water ? What harm has he done to it, who
 ‘ has drawn it : since he has done no more than filled
 ‘ the bucket, and then poured it out into the vessel ?’
 The hermite upon this, returned to himself : and
 having reflected on the meaning of the vision, called
 back the priest, and desired him to celebrate, and
 consecrate for him, as he used to do.

XLVIII.

Some of the brethren went one day to St. Antony,
 to consult him, whether they ought to have a regard
 to their dreams, when they found them followed by
 the event ; or to despise them, as illusions of the devil ?
 Now they had an ass with them, who happened to
 die in the way. As soon therefore as they came to the
 Saint, he was before hand with them ; and asked them ;
 how their ass came to die in the way ? Why, said they,
 father, how did you know of the death of the ass ?
 The devils, said he, shewed it me in a dream. Upon
 this they told him the occasion of their coming : for
 that they also had often dreams, which came to pass ;
 and for fear of being deluded, they desired his opinion
 of these matters. The Saint gave them full satis-
 faction on this head ; assuring them, by the example
 of the ass, that these are but tricks of the enemy (to
 fill the mind with superstition) and are by no means
 to be taken notice of.

XLIX.

The holy abbot Agatho being asked, which of
 the two was of greater importance, in a spiritual
 life, the mortification of the flesh, by corporal la-
 bours and austerities ; or the keeping a guard upon
 the inward man ? Answered that man was like a
 tree, in which corporal labours and austerities were
 as the leaves ; but the regularity of the interiour was
 the fruit. Wherefore, as our principal care must be
 about

about the fruit; because it is written, that *every tree, which doth not bring forth good fruit, shall be cut up, and shall be cast into the fire*; our chiefest solicitude must be about the interiour: yet we must not neglect the leaves, of corporal exercices; for they are both an ornament, and a covering, to protect the fruit.

L.

The same holy abbot used to say; that a man that is unmortified in regard to the passion of anger, though he were even to raise the dead to life, can not be pleasing to God.

LI.

The holy abbot Pemen, said; ' Evil cannot be
' cast out by evil: wherefore if any one doth evil to
' you, do you good to him: that you may over-
' come his evil by your good. He also said: He
' that is quarrellsome, or is apt to murmur and
' complain, is no monk: he that renders evil for evil,
' is no monk: he that is passionate, is no monk.

LII.

The same Saint said: Man's own will is as a wall of brass, that stands between him and God. Wherefore he that renounces his own will, may say with the Psalmist (Ps. xvii. 30.) *Through my God I shall go over the wall*: and may arrive at the true justice of God; concerning which it is written in the following verse: *as to my God, his way is undefiled.*

LIII.

Abbot Abraham, who had been a disciple of St. Agatho, asked the same St. Pemen: ' How comes
' it, father, that the devils are always assaulting me?
' The devils said the Saint, don't impugn them,
' that do their own wills: for our own wills are
' devils, in our regard; because they are always tempt-

‘ing us to follow them. But such as like Moses and
 ‘other Saints, have got the better of their own wills,
 ‘them the devils impugn.’

LIV.

A certain brother complained to St. Pambo, that the wicked spirits would not let him do good to his neighbours. O, said the Saint, don’t speak so; lest you charge our Lord with not being true to his word: for he has told us Luke x. *Behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy.* ’Tis then your want of a good will which you ought to accuse, on this occasion, and not the wicked spirits: for why don’t you resist them, and tread them under your feet?

LV.

One asked abbot Sisois: father, what is the meaning that these passions will not depart from me? The abbot answered, because you keep within you what belongs to them (by your irregular affections) but give up all that is theirs, (by mortifying all your disorderly affections) and they shall have no hold on you, but shall depart from you.

LVI.

An ancient father being asked, which was that *strait and narrow way that leads to life*, which is spoken of Matt. vii? answered, that *the strait and narrow way to life* is to do violence to ones own thoughts and inclinations; and to retrench for God’s sake ones own will: and that such as do this may say with the apostles Matt. xix, *behold we have left all things, and have followed thee.*

LVII.

One of the brothers said to abbot Sisois: ‘I desire
 ‘to keep a guard upon my heart. And how can
 you

‘ you, said the abbot, guard your heart, and keep
‘ it from danger, if you let the gate of the tongue
‘ be always open?’ The same holy abbot used to
say: ‘ That the great business of our pilgrimage is
‘ to keep a guard upon our mouths.’

LVIII.

Abbot Allois said: ‘ Except a religious man have
‘ it in his heart, that there is no one in the world
‘ but God and himself, he shall not attain to true
‘ rest.’

LIX.

One of the ancients said: ‘ As no one presumes
‘ to offer violence to a person that is at the side of
‘ the emperor: so neither can satan do any hurt
‘ to a soul, which sticks close to God: for it is
‘ written: *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh*
‘ *to you.* James iv. But because the poor soul is of-
‘ ten dissipated, and forgets her God, the enemy
‘ has power to drag her away into shameful passions.’

LX.

One of the brothers told an ancient religious; that
he was not sensible of any conflict, or war in his
soul. ‘ O, said the father, ’tis because your soul is
‘ like an open place, where every one comes in,
‘ and goes out, that pleases; without any resistance,
‘ on your part, or your taking any notice of them.
‘ But if you kept the door shut, by guarding
‘ against evil thoughts; you would quickly be sen-
‘ sible of the war they would wage against you.’

LXI.

Another ancient said, that satan had three har-
bingers, who usually prepared the way for him;
and served to introduce sin into the soul; viz.
oblivion•(or forgetfulness of God) *negligence*, and
concupiscence.

LXII.

LXII.

The patriarch Theophilus visiting the religious of mount Nitria, asked the superior, what was the greatest thing he had found out in that way of life? The father answered: *to find fault with myself, and to reprobend myself without ceasing.* The prelate replied, *there is no safer way than that.*

LXIII.

Abbot Mathois said: the more a man draws near to God, the more he sees himself to be a sinner: and thus when the prophet Isaias saw the Lord (Chap. vi.) he immediately cried out: *Wo is me—because I am a man of unclean lips—and I have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord of Hosts.*

LXIV.

St. Arsenius related, as of another (though it was thought he himself was the person) that when one of the ancient religious was sitting in his cell, he was called out by a voice, that said to him: Come, and I will shew thee the works of men. The person that called him out, brought him first to a place, where he saw a negro cutting wood, and making a large trufs, which he tried to carry, and found it too heavy: whereupon instead of lessening the trufs, he went and cut more wood, and still added to the burthen: and so continued to do, without offering to take any thing away from the load, which even at the first was more than he could carry. He went on a little further, where he saw a man standing by a lake, drawing water out of it, and pouring it into a vessel full of holes; from whence all the water run away again into the lake. After this he was brought to another place; where he saw a building, like a temple, and two men a horseback, marching in breast, and carrying together on their shoulders a long pole, with

with which they sought to go into the temple: but as they would not be put out of their way, nor stoop, or turn the pole, so that one might go in before the other; they were both of them kept out: because the length of the pole, in the manner they carried it, would not suffer them to enter within the gate of the temple. The person that shewed him these things, told him; that these two men represented such as pretend to carry the yoke of religion, without renouncing their pride: for that such as these, if they are not reclaimed, so as to walk humbly in the way of Christ, shall assuredly be kept out of God's eternal temple. He also told him, that the man, whom he saw cutting the wood, represented worldlings loaded with sins; who instead of doing penance, or turning from their evil ways, were continually encreasing their burthen, by adding sin to sin. And that the man who poured the water into the vessel full of holes, represented such as do many good works; but lose the fruit of them, by mingling with them many that are evil. Wherefore every one ought to be watchful, with regard to the purity and perfection of his works, that he may not be found hereafter to have laboured in vain.

LXV.

The same St. Arsenius recounted, that there was in the wilderness a certain old-man, who was wonderful in his actions, but simple in faith: so that being ignorant, he was in an error with regard to the holy eucharist; saying that the bread, which we receive is not really the body of Christ, but only the figure of his body. Two of the ancient fathers, hearing that he had said this, went to him, to beg of him to lay aside that erroneous opinion; and to believe with them, and with the universal church, that the eucharistick bread was indeed the body of Christ, and the chalice his blood, according to the truth,

truth, and not according to figure: because Christ himself had assured us, saying *this is my body* &c. But as the old man did not appear satisfied, with what they said on this subject: they agreed with him, that they should all three earnestly pray to God, during that week, with relation to this mystery; that the truth might be made manifest to him. On the following Sunday, they all three placed themselves together in the church; and at the celebrating the sacred mysteries, there appeared to them three, as it were a little child lying upon the altar: and when the priest was going to divide the sacramental bread, they saw an Angel dividing with a knife the body of the child, and receiving his blood in the chalice. And when they went up to communion, whilst all the rest received the blessed sacrament, in its usual form; the particle, that was given to the old-man, appeared to him bloody flesh. At which when he was frightened, and cried out; 'I believe, O Lord, that the consecrated bread is thy body, and the chalice is thy blood:' Immediately what he was going to receive returned to the shape of bread, according to the mystery. Wherefore they all gave thanks to God, and blessed him for his wonderful goodness, in not suffering this his servant to lose, by incredulity, the fruit of so many years labours.



Out of the book of the virtues and miracles of the religious of their own times; published under the title of THE SPIRITUAL MEADOW, by that holy man John Moschus, surnamed Eviratus, and his intimate friend, and individual companion S. Sophronius.

LXVI.

AN ancient religious dwelt in the monastery of the Towers (in Palestine) so eminent in virtue, that all the monks were desirous of making him their abbot: but the old man begged of them to excuse him, saying: ‘ Pardon me, reverend fathers, and suffer me to bewail my sins: I am not worthy to be intrusted with the care of souls: that is only the business of such men, as St. Antony, St. Pachomius, or St. Theodore; and not of such wretches, as I am.’ But as the brethren were still urgent with him, to accept of the superiority; and would not hear of any of his excuses: he told them at length: ‘ Let me pray for three days, that I may know the will of God: and what he shall ordain for me to do, that will I do.’ This he said on the Friday, and on the Sunday in the morning, our Lord took him to himself.

LXVII.

Another religious man (of the same monastery) a great servant of God, died in the hospital of Jericho. Now when the brethren took his body from thence, and carried it to be buried in his own monastery: they perceived a bright star over his head, which accompanied them all the way; and continued to be seen, till the body was entered.

LXVIII.

Another monk of the same monastery, whose name was Myrogenes, by the austerity of his life, had fallen into a dropsy: who, when the brethren came to visit him, and comfort him under his sufferings

rings ; would say to them : ‘ Good fathers, pray for me, that the inward man may not fall into a dropsy : ‘ for as to this exterior infirmity, I make it my prayer ‘ to God, that it may continue with me.’ The patriarch of Jerusalem (Eustochius) hearing of this holy man, desired to be at the charges of furnishing him with all necessaries : but the servant of God would not receive any thing of him : only begged, that he would pray for him, that he might be delivered from the everlasting sufferings of the world to come.

LXIX.

A brother desired the abbot Olympius, priest of the monastery of St. Gerasimus, to give him a word of instruction. ‘ Fly, said he, the conversation of ‘ hereticks : put a restraint upon thy tongue, and thy ‘ sensual appetite : and wheresoever thou art, say always to thyself : I am a stranger, and a pilgrim.’

LXX.

One of the fathers (of the laura of Cupatha) related to us, as what he had heard from the person himself to whom it happened : that when there was a war in Africa, between the Romans and the Moors ; and the latter, in a certain engagement, had defeated the former, and slew many of them ; one of the Roman soldiers in the flight, being closely pursued by a Barbarian, whose spear almost touched his back ; prayed earnestly to our Lord to deliver him ; as he had delivered St. Thecla, out of the hands of her enemies : and promised, if he escaped with his life, he would presently go into the desert, and dedicate himself wholly to the love and service of God. When behold looking back, he could see no more the Barbarian that pursued him ; or any other enemy. Wherefore to fulfil his promise, he presently repaired to the laura of Cupatha : and had already passed five and thirty years alone in a neighbouring cave, in devotion and penance.

LXXI.

LXXI.

When we (John and Sophronius) came to the monastery, which is called Philoxene, near the town of Dade in Cyprus, we found there a monk, a native of Melitene, whose name was Isidore, who passed his whole time in weeping and mourning. The brethren often desired him to desist from his lamentations, and to give himself some rest and ease, but he would not hear of it: alledging that he was the most enormous sinner, that ever had been since the creation. His history we had from his own mouth, to the following effect. Whilst he lived a married man in the world, both he and his wife were followers of the heresy of Severus the Eutychian. But one day his wife, visiting a catholic woman her neighbour, went with her to receive the catholic communion. The husband being informed of her going, made what haste he could after her, to prevent her receiving; but when he came, he found she had just then communicated. Upon which in a great rage, he laid hold of her throat, and obliged her to bring up the consecrated species; which he let fall into the dirt. When presently he perceived the sacred particle, which he had abused, shining with rays of light: and two days after, he saw a deformed black fellow, who said to him: 'You and I are condemned to suffer the same punishment together.' And when he asked him, who he was? He answered: 'I am the man, who struck the Lord Jesus, the Maker of all, on his cheek, in the time of his passion.' For this reason, said Isidore, I can never leave off weeping. And now you have heard my history, I hope you will be pleased to pray for me.

LXXII.

Two antient religious, travelling from Æga in Cilicia to Tarsus, were obliged, in the heat of the day, to go into an inn: where they found three young men, with a harlot in their company. The two religious
went,

went, and set down by themselves : and one of them taking out the holy gospel, began to read. The woman seeing this, left her company ; and came, and sat down by the old father, to hear him read the gospel. The servant of God would have put her away ; asking, how she could be so impudent, as to come and sit by them ? She replied : it is true, I am a wretched sinner : but our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, did not hinder a sinful woman from coming to him : why therefore should you cast me off ? The old father told her, that the woman, that came to our Saviour, renounced her wicked way of living, and was no longer a harlot. And I, said she, trust in Jesus Christ, that from this very hour, by his divine grace, I shall quit this sinful way, and never more be guilty of the like sins. She stood to her resolution : and presently leaving the world, and all she possessed, she went to the nunnery near Æga, to which the two old men recommended her : where, says my author, ‘ I saw her, being now an old woman of great prudence ; and learnt these things ‘ from her own mouth.’ Now her name was Mary.

LXXIII.

There was a certain comedian in Tarsus of Cilicia, whose name was Babylas : who led a very wicked life, and kept two concubines ; one of them was called Cometa, and the other Nicosa. This man, one day hearing in the church those words of the gospel ; *do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand*. Matt. iii. was suddenly touched with an extraordinary compunction for his sins ; and determined upon the spot, to quit the world for good and all ; and to dedicate the remainder of his days to devotion and penance. This resolution, as soon as he came home, he imparted to the two women : telling them, that they might, if they pleased, divide his whole substance between them ; but for his part, he was resolved to provide for the salvation of his soul, by renouncing the world, from that very hour,

hour, and entring into religion. They were both of them greatly moved with his words : and told him with one voice, and with abundance of tears ; that as they had been partners with him, in his sinful ways ; and had born him company, whilst he was walking in the broad road of perdition : so were they also determined, to accompany him in his conversion to God, and to enter with him, upon the narrow way of eternal life : for why should he think, in choosing the better part for himself, to leave them in the lurch ? Wherefore Babylas went, and shut himself up in one of the towers, belonging to the walls of the city : and the two women, after selling all their substance, and giving the price to the poor ; made themselves also a cell in the neighbourhood, where they dedicated themselves to a recluse and penitential life. This man, says my author, I myself saw, and was very much edified with his conversation. For he is a man exceedingly humble, mild and charitable.

LXXIV.

One of the fathers related to us, concerning St. Ephrem the patriarch of Antioch : that being very zealous and fervent in faith, he attempted the conversion of a famous monk, that lived upon a pillar, in the neighbourhood of Hierapolis ; who had been seduced by the Eutychian hereticks, into a partnership with them in their errors. This man stood out against the remonstrances of the holy patriarch : and to shew how confident he was of the truth of his religion, he made a proposal, that a great fire should be kindled, and that the two, he and the patriarch, should go into the fire together ; and that they should abide by the faith of him, who should come out of the flames without hurt. St. Ephrem told him, he had proposed a thing, that far exceeded the strength of such a poor sinner, as he acknowledged himself to be : however, that confiding in the mercies of his Saviour ; and hoping by this means

to bring about the salvation of an erring soul, he would agree to the proposal. Immediately he ordered a great quantity of wood to be piled up; which he himself set on fire: and then he desired the monk to come down from his pillar, that they might go hand in hand into the flames. But the heretick, who thought to have frightened the patriarch, with his proposal; being dismayed at his courage and resolution, would not come down. The Saint then going up to the fire; and taking off his stole, prayed to our Lord Jesus Christ, who was pleased to be incarnate, for the love of us; to make manifest on this occasion his divine truth: and when he had ended his prayer, he cast his stole into the midst of the flames; where it remained for the space of three hours, till all the wood was consumed: and then it was taken out whole and entire, without having been so much as singed by the fire. The Stylite, astonished at so evident a miracle, gave glory to God, and was converted upon the spot, to the catholic church; and was admitted by St. Ephrem to receive the holy communion at his own hands.

LXXV.

The same St. Ephrem, before he was patriarch, was count, or governour of all the Oriental district, of which Antioch was the capital; and was very illustrious for his almsdeeds and works of mercy. In his time, the city of Antioch was destroyed by an earthquake: which calamity furnished him with frequent occasions of exercising his charity: and of employing a number of workmen, and labourers in repairing the publick buildings of that city. Now one of the fathers related to us, says my author, how on this occasion a certain bishop, privately withdrawing himself from his see, and putting on a poor labourer's frock, came to Antioch; and there hired out himself to serve the masons. After some time the governour, in a vision by night, saw this labourer lying asleep, and over his

his head a pillar of fire, which reached even up to the skie. He was very much astonished at the sight: the more because he perceived nothing in the whole garb, or person of the man, but what appeared mean and contemptible: however, as he continued for many nights to see the same thing; he sent for the labourer, and asked him, who, or what he was? He answered, he was a poor man, who endeavoured to gain his little livelihood by his work. The count not satisfied with this answer, told him plainly, he should not go from him, till he had discovered to him the whole truth: and continued to conjure him, in so pressing a manner, to give him a more particular account of himself; that at length, after requiring a solemn promise of secrecy, at least till he should be dead; He told him: 'I am a bishop, but for God's sake have resigned up my bishoprick; and I came hither, as to a strange place, where no one might know me; and here I mortify my flesh; employ myself in labouring; and by my work, I earn myself a little bread. Ask not my name: for that I must, and will conceal. But take thou care to add to thy alms-deeds, and thy good works, according to thy power: for before it is long, God shall promote thee to the apostolick see of this city; to feed the flock, which Christ our true God, has purchased with his own blood. Therefore, as I said, be diligent in all the works of mercy; and always stand up zealously, and contend earnestly for the orthodox faith: for with such sacrifices as these, God is best pleased.' St. Ephrem hearing all this, glorified our Lord, who has many hidden servants in the world; that are known to himself alone.'

LXXVI.

The abbat Stephen related to us, of a certain monk of the monastery of our holy father St. Sabas, whose name was Cyriacus: that one day, when his worldly friends were come to visit him, and knocked at the

door of his cell ; he prayed to God, that he might not be seen by them : then opening the door, he went out of his cell, into the desert, without their perceiving him : and staid abroad in the desert, till he understood, they were gone away.

LXXVII.

The same abbat Stephen related to us, concerning father Julian the Stylite (illustrious for many miracles) that there was in his neighbourhood a lion ; that did much mischief : which the servant of God understanding, called one day his disciple Pancratius ; and bid him go, two miles to the south : and there, said he, thou shalt find the lion ; and thou shalt say to him : ‘ Julian, the poor servant of Jesus Christ, commands thee in the name of the same Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who gives life to all things, to be gone from this country.’ Pancratius went and found the lion ; and spoke to him, as the Saint had ordered him : and the beast immediately obeyed, and was seen no more in that province.

LXXVIII.

Father Peter, a priest of the same monastery of St. Sabas, told us of another holy man, by name Thaleus, of the province of Cilicia ; how he had spent three-score years in religion, in such perpetual compunction and devotion ; as never to cease from weeping : and that he would be ever saying : ‘ this present time is allowed us by the divine mercy, for repentance and penance : and what a terrible account shall we have to give, if we don’t make good use of it ?’

LXXIX.

Three antient religious came to the cell of the holy abbat Stephen, priest of the monastery of the Æliotæ, to be edified by his conversation. Whilst they were in his company, they spoke of different subjects of piety :
but

but he kept silence. Father, said they, we came to you, in hopes of learning something of you: why do you say nothing to us? 'I beg your pardon, said he; 'I really did not take notice of what you were speaking of. But to tell you the truth; I have nothing 'else night and day before my eyes, but our Lord Jesus Christ crucified.' With this answer, they departed, not a little edified.

LXXX.

Abbot John, surnamed Molybius, recounted to us, concerning this same holy priest Stephen: that in his last illness the physicians obliged him to eat meat. Now a brother of his, a secular, but a very virtuous man, finding him eating, was shocked, and very much grieved, that he, who had lived so many years in such great abstinence and mortification, should now in the latter end of his life, fall to the eating of flesh-meat. Whilst he had this in his mind, he fell into an extasy; and saw in spirit one standing by him, and reprehending him, for taking scandal, without cause, at what his brother did, through necessity, and by obedience. 'But, said he, if you desire to know the merit and 'glory of your brother; turn and see him.' Upon which, turning about, he saw his brother, fastened to the cross with our Lord: 'See, said the person, that appeared to him, 'in what glory your brother is. And 'learn to glorify him, who glorifies in this manner 'them that love him in truth.'

LXXXI.

Abbot Theodosius related of himself, that in his younger days, before he embraced a solitary life, he saw one day, in an extasy, a person shining brighter than the sun, who took him by the hand, and said: come along with me; for thou must wrestle, and fight, for a crown. With that he led him into a theatre, im-

menſely wide ; and full of people (of whom one part was clothed in white, the other in black) and placed him in the miſt of the theater. And here he ſaw, ſtanding before him, a filthy negro, of a gigantick ſize, and ſtrength ; with whom he was told he was to wreſtle. He would have excuſed himſelf ; alledging, that no ſtrength upon earth, could be able to ſtand againſt ſuch a monſter : but the perſon that brought him thither, told him, he muſt needs wreſtle with him. ‘ Go up
 ‘ then, ſaid he, chearfully and courageouſly ; and at-
 ‘ tack him : and I will ſtand by thee, and aſſiſt thee ;
 ‘ and give thee the crown of victory.’ Upon this encouragement, Theodoſius ſeemed to himſelf to have entered the liſts ; and with the help of his friend, to have overthrown his adverſary ; and received the crown : to the great joy and triumph of all them that were clothed in white ; who all gave praiſe and glory to him, who had given his ſervant the victory : whiſt the others in black were all confounded, and put to flight. This ſame abbot Theodoſius, as we learnt from his diſciple, the abbot Cyriacus, ſpent five and thirty years in ſolitude, eating but once in two days, and obſerving a perpetual ſilence. Of this I was for ſome time an eye-witneſs, ſays John Moſchus, for I lived ten years in the ſame monaſtery.

LXXXII.

When Sophronius and I (John Moſchus) were at Alexandria, we went to viſit abbat Palladius, a true ſervant of God, ſuperior of the monaſtery in Lithoſomenon ; and we aſked of him a word of edification. ‘ My children, ſaid he, our time here is very ſhort :
 ‘ let us then fight during this ſhort time : let us labour
 ‘ in earneſt, for the immortal goods of a happy eterni-
 ‘ ty. O look upon the martyrs : look upon thoſe
 ‘ champions of heaven ; and ſee how bravely they have
 ‘ fought and conquered——what cruel torments they
 ‘ have ſuſtained ; with what ardour of faith, they have
 ‘ gone through all the ſufferings of the ſhort moment
 ‘ of

‘ of this present time ; and purchased thereby an eternal and immense weight of glory. To labour therefore, to suffer, and to overcome, with the help of our Lord, the tribulations of this life, is the way to prove ourselves true lovers of God. In the meantime, he himself will be with us ; and will fight and conquer in us, and for us : he will alleviate, by his divine grace, all our labours and sufferings. Patience and penitence must then be our exercises, in this short time, that is allowed us here ; that so we may arrive at the honour and dignity, of being the eternal temples of God.’ He added, that we should always set before our eyes him, who *had not*, during his mortal life, *where to lay his head* : and that we should remember, that the suffering of *tribulation*, according to St. Paul, Rom. v. *worketh patience ; and patience trial ; and trial hope ; and hope confoundeth not* &c. so that this is indeed the true way to dispose our souls, for the kingdom of heaven. Wherefore, *my children*, said he, *let us not love the world, nor the things that are in the world.* 1 John ii. but let us keep a constant guard upon our thoughts, by recollection of spirit ; which is the medicine of salvation.

LXXXIII.

We asked this holy man, what had been the first occasion of his call to a monastick life ? Upon which he related to us the following history : ‘ There was, said he, in my country (Thessalonica in Macedonia) an ancient religious man, named David, a native of Mesopotamia : who lived for four-score years shut up in a little cell by himself, without the walls of the city (at the distance of about three furlongs) in great sanctity and abstinence. Now it happened, by reason of the inroads of the barbarians, that soldiers were placed, all round the walls of the city, to guard it in the night, for fear of the enemy. These guards observed one night flames of fire, coming out of the windows of the cell of the servant of God : from

' whence they concluded, that the Barbarians had been
 ' there ; and had set fire to his cell. But to their
 ' great astonishment, when they went out the next
 ' morning, to see what mischief had been done ; they
 ' found the old man safe and sound, and no marks of
 ' fire in his cell. The following night, they saw the
 ' same fire again : which from that time, continued
 ' to be seen every night, for a long time after, even
 ' till the death of the holy anchorer ; and many of the
 ' citizens often passed the night upon the wall, on pur-
 ' pose to see it. This I myself saw, not once, or twice,
 ' but many times : upon which I said to myself ; if
 ' God gives so much glory to his servants in this
 ' world ; how much, thinkest thou, has he reserved
 ' for them in the world to come ; where *the just shall*
 ' *shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*
 ' And this was the first occasion of my resolving upon
 ' taking the monastick habit, and entring upon a reli-
 ' gious course of life,

LXXXIV.

The same holy abbat told us of a soldier in Alexan-
 dria, whose name was John ; who constantly observed
 this rule and order of life. Every day he came early
 in the morning to the monastery ; and there sat down
 all alone, clothed in haircloth, at the steps of the
 chappel of St. Peter ; and employed himself in mak-
 ing baskets, in silence and recollection, till the ninth
 hour of the day. In the mean time he used no other vocal
 prayer but this : *' From my secret sins cleanse me o Lord,*
 ' that when I pray, I may not be confounded.' This
 he repeated seven times in the day : and after each
 time, continued recollected and silent for a whole hour.
 At the ninth hour, he put off his haircloth ; and put
 on his military habit, and went to his station amongst
 the soldiers. With this man, said the father, I lived for
 eight years ; and was much edified with his silence,
 and his whole manner of life.

LXXXV.

LXXXV.

The same holy man told us one day, that the source of all heresies and schisms in the church, was the loving God too little, and ourselves too much.

LXXXVI.

He also related to us a history, of a certain merchant of Alexandria; a man very religious, charitable and hospitable; who had a wife, that was also a very good humble Christian, and a little daughter, six years old. This man being called away, by his business, to Constantinople, was asked by his wife, at parting, to whose care and protection he would recommend her, and her child, during his absence? He answered, I recommend you to our blessed Lady, the mother of God. Now he left with them, in the house, one only servant-man, a slave: who by the instigation of the devil, conceived a design of murdering his mistress, and her little daughter; and then rising the house, and so going off with the spoils. To put this in execution; taking the kitchen knife with him, he attempted to go into the parlour, where his mistress was sitting at her work, with her little girl. But when he came to the door, he was struck blind; and was held, in such manner there, as that he could neither go forward, nor backward. At length he called to his mistress, desiring her to come out to him, she knowing nothing of his case, told him, if he wanted any thing, he might come in. He called again, and again; but she would not come to him. So that at length in rage and despair he stabbed himself. His mistress hearing him fall; and seeing what he had done; called in the neighbours: with whom there came in also some of the officers of justice. They found him not yet dead: and by that means learnt from his own mouth the particulars here mentioned: upon which all of them glorified

glorified our Lord, who had in this miraculous manner, preserved the life, both of the mother and the child; who were thus recommended to the care of his Virgin mother.

LXXXVII.

The same Palladius related also to us another remarkable history, which he learnt from a master of a ship, who was himself witness to it. A widow, named Mary, had made away with two of her own children, in order to recommend herself to a man, with whom she was in love; but who refused to marry her, on account of her children. But when she had secretly perpetrated this crime; and had signified to the man, that her children were now removed out of the way: he conceived so great a horror for her, that he declared, with a solemn oath, he would never marry her, on any account. Being thus disappointed, and apprehending lest her guilt should be divulged, and she should fall into the hands of justice, and be put to death: to withdraw herself to a greater distance from the danger; she went on board the vessel belonging to the captain, from whom the holy abbat had his informations. But although she thus fled from the justice of man; she could not escape the justice of God. For when they had set sail, and were advanced into the deep; all on a sudden the ship stood still: so that for many days they could neither go forward, nor backward; though they saw other ships, not far off them, holding divers courses, and going on with prosperous gales. All were in the utmost consternation, to see themselves stand thus immoveable, in the middle of the sea (for there were many passengers on board): particularly the master of the ship, whose all was at stake, was in the greatest concern; and with much instance begged of God, to send them a deliverance. At length in his
prayer

prayer, he heard a voice, that said: 'Put Mary out of the vessel: and you shall have a good voyage.' As he did not comprehend, what the meaning of this should be; nor knew who this Mary was; and therefore was dubious what was to be done: the voice said to him again: 'Put Mary, I say, out of your ship, and all shall go well with you.' With this he called out, *Mary, Mary*: and upon her answering to her name, he desired to speak to her apart: and told her he was afraid, that on account of his sins, they were all going to perish. O no, sir, said she, fetching a deep sigh, 'tis rather on account of my sins: for there is no crime, that I have not been guilty of: and with that she told him the history of the murder of the children. He then proposed to her; as it were in order to know, whether it was for his sins, or for her sins, that the ship was stopped; that the boat should be let down; and that he should first go out of the ship into the boat; to see whether the ship would then advance: and if not, then he should return into the ship; and she should go down into the boat. He went down first, according to his proposal, into the boat; but both ship and boat remained immoveable. But as soon as he was come back; and she was gone down out of the ship; the boat immediately turned round five times, and then went down with her to the bottom, and was seen no more. And presently the ship sprung forward; and continued to advance, with such unusual speed, as to make in three days and a half, a voyage, which otherwise must have cost them fifteen days.

LXXXVIII.

As another instance of the justice of God, often overtaking the wicked, even on this side of eternity; my author relates how he and Sophronius, sheltering themselves, one day at noon, from the violence
of

of the heat of the sun, under the covert of a place called the *Tetrapylon* (where the Alexandrians say, the bones of the prophet Jeremias were deposited) found there three blind men sitting; and heard them relating to one another, how they became blind. The first said, that being a sailor he was struck blind (by lightening) at sea. The second, that he had lost his eyes, by the fire, working in a glass-house. But the third made a sincere confession: that being an idle young fellow, and hating to work, he had begun to take to pilfering. And that seeing one day a man carried to be buried, in rich clothes; and deposited in a monument, behind St. John's church; he had watched his opportunity; and going into the monument, had stripped the corps of the clothes: but that when he was about to take away the linnen also, which was next to the body; the dead corps (by some supernatural power) sat up: and fixing its nails in his eyes, plucked them out. 'And thus, said he, wretched I, in great anguish and desolation, quitting all that I had taken, fled out of the monument: and this is the true history of my blindness.' This account, which these two servants of God heard from the mouth of the blindman himself, they committed to writing, for a warning to evil doers, not to think, even in their most private sins, to escape the notice of the justice of God.

LXXXIX.

No less remarkable in this kind, is what these same holy men learnt from abbat John, superior of a monastery near Antioch: with relation to a young man, who had in like manner presumed to strip the dead corps, of a maiden gentlewoman; and when he would have gone out of the monument, laden with the spoils, was held fast by the dead; and not suffered to stir, till he had restored
all

all he had taken ; and had made a solemn promise, to renounce his wicked course of life, and to enter forthwith into religion. He was as good as his word, and went immediately to this same abbat John ; and with the greatest marks of compunction, begged of him, for the love of God, to receive him into his monastery. And when the abbat enquired of him the cause of that excessive grief, and anguish, which he saw in him : he related to him the whole matter of fact as above. The abbat comforted him, and received him to the monastick habit ; and appointed him for his cell a cavern in the mountain, where at the very time, that my authors heard from him this history (which happened but a little while before) the young man was actually doing penance for his sins, and serving our Lord with great fervour and piety.

XC.

Sophronius and John Moschus visited also one day a holy anchoret, who had his cell at the distance of eighteen miles from Alexandria ; and they begged of him to give them some lessons, for their instruction and edification. ‘ My children, said he, you do well
‘ in renouncing the world, in order to secure your
‘ souls. Go then, and remain in your cells ; be
‘ sober and watch ; keep yourselves quiet and
‘ silent, and pray without ceasing : and I trust in my
‘ God, that he will send you there the true science of
‘ the Saints, to enlighten your souls. He said again,
‘ my children, if you desire to be safe, flee from
‘ men : and be not of the number of those that run
‘ gadding about, from house to house, from place
‘ to place, for the sake of worldly interest, or empty
‘ glory ; and thus fill their souls with nothing but
‘ vanity. Let us flee, my children, let us flee : for
‘ the time is near at hand. Again he said : Alas,
‘ alas ! how much shall we lament another day ; how
‘ bit-

' bitterly shall we repent ; for not having been hearty
 ' penitents now ? Our misery is so great ; that when
 ' we are praised, we are puffed up with it ; and when
 ' we are dispraised, we cannot brook it : the one
 ' suggests to us pride and vain glory ; the other de-
 ' presses us poor wretches with sadness, and anguish.
 ' Now there can no good be found, where either
 ' sadness or vain glory resides. He said again ; the
 ' devils make it their business, when they have drawn
 ' the soul into sin, to strive to cast her headlong
 ' into dejection and despair, that so they may com-
 ' plete her ruin. They are always plotting against
 ' the poor soul ; and saying, *when shall she die, and*
 ' *her name perish ?* But let the soul, that is sober,
 ' reply to them, with confidence in her God. *I shall*
 ' *not die, but live, and shall declare the works of the*
 ' *Lord.* And if they should say to her again : *Get*
 ' *thee away from hence to the mountain like a sparrow :*
 ' let her reply, behold *my God, and my Saviour, he is*
 ' *my protector, I will not go hence.* He also said : keep
 ' a guard always at the gate of your hearts : and let
 ' no stranger in. But diligently enquire, *Art thou one*
 ' *of ours, or of our adversaries ?* Jos. v.'

XCI.

' We went also to abbot John of Petra, and de-
 ' fired of him a word of instruction. This good
 ' father recommended particularly to us poverty of
 ' spirit, (in such manner as to love to be bare of all
 ' earthly things) and continence or mortification.
 ' And to this purpose, he related to us, that when
 ' he was a young man and abode in the desert of
 ' Scete, one of the religious of that place being ill
 ' had occasion for a small quantity of vinegar : but
 ' that their poverty and abstinence was so great, that
 ' not one drop could be found, in all the four mona-
 ' steries : although there were there at that time no
 ' fewer than three thousand five hundred fathers.'

XCII.

XCII.

John the Cilician abbot of Raythu used to inculcate to his brethren the following lessons. ‘ My children, as we have fled away from the world, by entering into religion; so let us also flee away from the flesh, and all its passions and concupiscences. Let us walk in the steps of our fathers, and holy founders, who first inhabited this place; and led such strict and mortified lives; with so much silence and recollection. O, my children, let us not be so unhappy, as to defile by our sins, this place, which our fathers have taken so much pains to cleanse, and to purify from the evil spirits, and their works of darkness.’ He also told them for their encouragement; that when he first came thither, he found aged monks, who had spent seventy years in that place; living all that time upon nothing else but herbs and dates: and that for his own part, he had now been seventy six years there; and had gone through many a conflict, and a great variety of molestations, and temptations from the spirits of darkness. This was that abbot of Raithu, to whom St. John Climacus dedicated his *ladder of paradise*.

XCIII.

We went also to visit abbot John the Persian: and he recounted to us concerning that great man, Gregory the most blessed bishop of Rome, the following passage. ‘ When, said he, I was at Rome; (to which city I went to venerate the sepulchers of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul) and was one day standing in the middle of the city; they told me the pope was about to pass that way. Upon which I thought I would stay, and cast myself at his feet, to shew reverence to him. Now when he came near, and saw me ready to pay him that veneration; I call God to witness, that he first prostrated himself

‘ self upon the ground before me, and would not
‘ rise up again, till he saw me get up : then saluting
‘ me, with a wonderful humility, he put three
‘ pieces of money into my hand ; and gave orders
‘ to his people that I should be supplied with all
‘ necessaries. All which gave me occasion to glorify
‘ God : for that exceeding great humility, mercy,
‘ and unbounded charity, which he had bestowed
‘ upon this his servant.

XCIV.

Abbot Andrew, superior of a monastery near Alexandria, related to us : that when in his youth, he was going from Alexandria into Palestine, with nine others in his company ; one of the number, who was a Jew, named Theodore, was taken ill, with a violent fever, in the desert, through which they were obliged to pass. The rest of the company pitying his case, afforded him what comfort they could, and led him forward, in hopes of being able to reach some town or village, where he might be refreshed : but the vehement heat of the sun, joined with the fatigue of the journey, and the excessive thirst he endured, would not suffer him to go on any farther ; and brought him to that extremity of weakness and faintness, that there were now no hopes left of his life : so that his companions fearing, lest the same should be their own case, if they did not make the best of their way out of that burning desert, thought of leaving him, since they could no longer be of any service to him. He seeing them about to go away from him, conjured them for Christ’s sake, not to let him die without baptism : since he vehemently desired to die a Christian. They answered him, that there was no one amongst them qualified to administer the sacrament of baptism : and that this sacrament could not by any means be administered without water : which could not possibly be had in those

those burning sands. But as he still persisted, begging and praying with many tears, that they would not be so cruel, as to let him die, without making him a Christian; one of them (inspired, as we may believe, from heaven) desired the rest to lift him up, and to hold him; for he was not able to stand by himself: then filling both his hands with sand, he poured it upon his head, at three different effusions, repeating at the same time the form of words, used by the church in the administration of baptism, to which all the company answered, Amen. When behold: ‘As God is my witness, brethren, said the abbot to us, the man (that was dying before) was so suddenly, and perfectly healed, and strengthened by Christ our Lord, that there remained in him not the least sign of illness, or weakness; or of having suffered any thing whatsoever. On the contrary, he appeared now sound and strong, and with a florid countenance; and performed what remained of the journey, through the desert, with a wonderful alacrity, so as to be always the foremost of the company.’ The abbot also related, how that as soon as they came into Palestine, to the city of Ascalon; they carried the convert to the holy bishop Dionysius; recounting to him all that had happened; and his miraculous cure, upon his being baptized with the sand. The good prelate glorified our Lord, for his goodness and mercy, shewn on this occasion: but after consulting with his clergy, concluded, that as neither scripture nor tradition allow of the administering of baptism, otherwise than in water, the man ought to be baptized in water, as the church prescribes. And for greater solemnity, he sent him away to the banks of the Jordan, that he might be baptized there, where our Lord himself was baptized.

XCV.

When we were in the isle of Samos, the lady Mary, that venerable and charitable matron, mother of the illustrious courtier Paul, related to us : that when she lived in the city of Nisibis in Mesopotamia, there was in that city a very good Christian woman, who was married to a pagan husband, but a well meaning simple man. They were but low in their circumstances : only they had by them a small sum, of about fifty pieces of silver ; which the man had a mind to put out to use. The good woman told him, the best way he could put his money out, was to give it to Jesus Christ, the God of the Christians : for that no one gave such good interest for money as he did ; and that he would even return the principal double. He asked her, where he might find this God of the Christians ; that he might put out his money into such good hands ? She led him to the church ; and shewed him there in the porch, a number of poor people ; and told him, that what was given to the poor, the God of the Christians accepted of, as given to himself ; and would repay it with interest. Upon this, without more ado, he freely, and chearfully distributed the whole sum amongst the poor. About three months after, finding himself in some straits, he told his wife, that the God of the Christians did not seem to take any notice of the debt ; and that he was now in want. She, with great faith, bid him go to the place, where he had lent him the money ; and no doubt but he should be paid. He went to the church ; where he saw the poor, to whom he had given the money ; but met with no one, that offered to reimburse what he had laid out upon them, or to pay him any interest. At length, whilst he was thinking with himself what he was to do

do, or to whom he was to address himself; he saw lying at his feet one piece of silver; which he took up, and carried home. His wife told him, the God of the Christians (who without being seen by us, disposes of all things, and provides for all the world) had sent him that piece of money: and she desired him to go, and buy with it what they wanted for that day; and that he would not fail to provide for them also for the time to come. He went to market with the money, and bought some bread, and wine, and a fish for their dinner, which he gave to his wife to dress. In opening the fish, she found in its entrails a precious stone of admirable beauty; which she shewed to her husband: and he, without knowing the value of it, carried it to a jeweller to sell. The jeweller bid him, at first sight, five pieces of silver for it. What, said he, so much as that? Supposing the man was not serious. The jeweller then bid him ten pieces: but he still thinking he was in jest (for he had no notion of the value of the stone) stood silent. But when he offered him twenty, and then thirty, and afterwards forty, and at length rose to fifty pieces of silver; he began to be convinced the jewel was worth a great deal more; and stood upon a higher price. The jeweller rising gradually came at last to offer him three hundred pieces of silver: which he agreed to take; and carried the money home to his wife. She took occasion from thence to represent to him, how well he had been dealt with by the God of the Christians; and how good, and how bountiful he was, who for the fifty pieces of silver he had lent to him, three months before, had returned him in so short a time three hundred. This wonderful event was immediately followed by the conversion of the man: who ceased not afterwards to glorify God, for his infinite goodness to him: and to hold himself highly indebted to the wisdom and

piety of his religious wife; who had been the happy instrument, by which he was brought to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and of his saving truths.

XCVI.

When we were at Alexandria, in the days of the holy patriarch Eulogius (cotemporary with St. Gregory the great, and his intimate friend) we there met with Leontius of Apamea, a most religious and faithful man; who had lived for many years at Cyrene; and was come to be consecrated bishop of that see. This prelate related to us the following history. In the days of the patriarch Theophilus, a famous philosopher called Synesius was made bishop of Cyrene: who had an intimate friend, a philosopher also, whose name was Evagrius. This man was a pagan, and very averse from the Christian religion; to which the holy prelate would gladly have brought him over: particularly he objected against the articles of the resurrection of the dead, and of the eternal rewards and punishments of the world to come. However Synesius was not discouraged with this resistance he met with; and did not leave off using all the means in his power, for the conversion of his old friend: till the grace of God blessing his endeavours, Evagrius was at length determined to embrace the Christian faith; and was baptized with his whole family. Some time after he brought a bag of three hundred pieces of gold to the bishop; and put it in his hands, for the use of the poor: desiring he would be pleased to give him a note under his own hand, that Christ would repay him in the world to come: which Synesius readily complied with. Evagrius some years after this fell ill of the distemper of which he died: and being near his end, he gave the bishop's note of hand to his sons; desiring it might be buried with him.

His

His sons did as he desired; and put the note in the hand of their father's corps, and buried him with it. Three nights after Evagrius appeared to Synesius in his sleep; and bid him go to the monument where his body lay buried; and to receive back his note: for that the whole had been repaid to him: and as a testimony of it, he should find an acquittance, written by his (Evagrius's) own hand. The bishop next morning sent for the young men, and asked them if they had not buried some paper with their father? They acknowledged they had, at his request: but that no one knew any thing of it. Then taking them along with him, together with his clergy, and the principal men of the city, he ordered the tomb to be opened in their presence; where they found the philosopher lying, with the paper in his hand: which when they had taken out of his hand, and had opened it; they saw, under the note, an acquittance; which appeared to be newly written, in Evagrius's own hand; by which he acknowledged that he had received the contents, and was fully satisfied for the whole sum, which he had given by the hands of Synesius, to Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour. This note and acquittance, as the same Leontius assured us, is kept to this day, in the treasury of the church of Cyrene; and is always, in a special manner, recommended to the care of the treasurer of that cathedral.

XCVII.

One of the fathers related to us; that when he was at Constantinople, upon some necessary business; and was sitting one day in the church; there came up to him a gentleman of condition; and saluting him, desired to sit down by him, and to hear from him some lessons for the good of his soul. The father

told him, that the making a good use of the things of the earth would be a great means to bring him to heavenly goods. ‘ Father, said he, you
‘ are in the right: and that man is happy indeed,
‘ who places all his hopes in God, and commits
‘ himself wholly to God. I had a father, a gentleman of note, and very rich, but a great alms-
‘ giver, who distributed large sums of money to the
‘ poor. He asked me one day, after giving me an
‘ account of all he was worth, whether I chose that
‘ he should keep all that, and leave it to me, at
‘ his death; or that he should dispose of it, in the
‘ manner he had begun, by giving it to Christ, by
‘ the hands of the poor, and to leave me Christ, for
‘ my guardian and trustee. I told him, I was very
‘ well satisfied with his disposing of his worldly
‘ substance in charity; and that I chose Christ before
‘ all other goods: for all these pass away; they
‘ are with us to day, and they are gone to-morrow:
‘ but Christ remains forever. After this, my father
‘ was so profuse in his alms; that when he came to
‘ die, he left me very poor: but not without a great
‘ confidence in Christ, to whose care he had committed me. Now there was at this time another
‘ gentleman of distinction in the city, exceeding rich;
‘ and who was married to a lady, a very good Christian, and one that greatly feared our Lord. They
‘ had one only daughter, to inherit all their substance: and as she was now marriageable; the wife
‘ proposed to her husband, that instead of giving her
‘ in marriage to some rich nobleman; who if he
‘ were not a servant of God, might make her miserable; they should rather look out for some virtuous
‘ humble man, that feared God; and would
‘ both love and cherish her, and go hand in hand with
‘ her to heaven: for riches they wanted none for her,
‘ having a large fortune to give her: and therefore
‘ virtue

‘ virtue and happiness was all they had to seek for. The
‘ husband approved of her way of thinking; and bid
‘ her go to church, and recommend the matter
‘ earnestly to God; and after praying, with all the
‘ fervour she was able, to address herself to the first
‘ person, whom God should send into the church, as
‘ to the man designed by providence, to be the
‘ husband of their daughter. She went, and prayed;
‘ and after she had finished her prayers, she sat down
‘ in the church: and as providence had ordered it,
‘ I was the first that came in. She presently sent her
‘ servant to call me to her; and inquired of me,
‘ who, or whence I was? I told her, I was of this
‘ city, and was son of such a one. What, said she,
‘ of that gentleman, who gave away all his estate in
‘ alms? Yes, said I, of the same. Have you a
‘ wife, said she? I answered, no: and I told her
‘ what my father had said to me; and how he had
‘ given me Christ for my guardian and trustee. Upon
‘ which she glorified God: and told me that my good
‘ guardian had provided me, both with a wife, and
‘ a plentiful estate; and wished me to use them both,
‘ with the fear of God. Thus I received both her
‘ daughter, and all her worldly substance: and I
‘ pray God that I may walk, to the end of my life,
‘ in the footsteps of my father.

XCVIII.

Another of the fathers related to us; concerning
a certain lady of the first quality; who after visiting
the holy places, and performing her devotions in
Jerusalem; went down to Cesarea, to fix her abode in
that city. Here she desired of the bishop, to place
some religious woman with her, who might teach her
humility, and the fear of God. The bishop, for this
purpose, made choice of a very virtuous humble maid;

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whom

whom he recommended to her. After some time he asked her, how she liked the virgin, whom he had placed with her? She is good, said she, but is of no great service to my soul: for she is very humble, and lets me do all that I please, and never contradicts me. Upon this the bishop sent a woman to her, that was of a more rough and untowardly disposition; and who failed not to give the good lady frequent occasions of exercising her patience, as well as her humility and charity; in bearing with her uneasy temper, her unruly tongue, and her perpetual contradictions, and reproaches. The bishop after some time again desired to know, how she liked this other woman? She answered, that she had reason to be very well contented with her; because she was indeed of great service to her soul; by teaching her patience, meekness and humility: which are best learnt, in the school of reproaches and contradictions.

XCIX.

One of the fathers related also to us; that there were two neighbouring bishops, who had some contest between them, upon affairs relating to their respective dioceses; which was like to turn out very much to the prejudice of the weaker of the two: because his antagonist was a politick man, and one that had great power and interest. Wherefore being sensible of the danger, he assembled one day all his clergy, and told them, he had found out an expedient, by means of which, through the grace of Christ, he made no doubt but they should gain their cause, and overcome their adversary. They could not comprehend, how this could be; considering the power, and the craft of the man, whom they had to deal with. Well, said he, stay a little, and you shall see the goodness of God. On such a day, they celebrate in that diocese,
with

with great solemnity, the festival of the holy martyrs; on that day therefore you shall go thither, along with me: and what you shall see me do; do all of you the same; and we shall carry our cause. On the day appointed, they all followed him to the neighbouring city; not being able to conceive, by what means he intended to overcome his adversary. When they came to the place, they found the whole people assembled, with their bishop, and his clergy. When without any more ado, their prelate went up, they all following him, and prostrated himself, with them all, at the feet of the other bishop: saying, *Forgive us, my good lord, we are all of us your servants.* The other, struck with astonishment, at so great humility; and at the same time touched with compunction, God changing his heart, fell down also upon his face, and taking hold of the feet of his fellow bishop, cried out; *It is you that are both my lord, and my father:* and so from that moment their contestation was at an end: and they ever after lived in perfect mutual concord and charity. Thus the good prelate, by his humility, gained both his cause, and the heart of his adversary; and told his clergy upon the occasion, that this was the true way to overcome their enemies.

C.

A certain brother, who was assaulted with sadness, applied to one of the fathers; asking what he should do; because his thoughts were continually suggesting to him, that he was but losing his time in religion, and could never be saved? 'Brother, said the father, 'whatever you do, never think of going back to the world, which you have renounced. If we cannot arrive at the land of promise; it is better for us to die in the wilderness, than to return into Egypt.'

CI

Gregory the governor of the province of Africa, a good Christian, and a great lover of the poor, and of the religious, related to us the following history : which happened in our times, in his country ; that is, in the district of Apamea in Syria. There is in that region, a place called Gonagus, forty miles distant from the city of Apamea : in the neighbourhood of which, some country-boys, in the way of play, took upon them to mimic the sacrifice of the mass, and the holy communion ; according to what they had seen done by the priests in the church. For this purpose, they appointed one of their number to officiate as priest, and two others to assist as deacon and subdeacon : and making a large stone, in the middle of the field, serve for an altar, they placed some bread, and some wine, in an earthen cup, upon it. Then he that personated the priest, having his two ministers on each hand of him ; recited the words of the sacred oblation, and consecration (which he had learnt by heart, by being near the altar ; because in some places the priests recited them aloud) and proceeded in the mass, till towards the end of the canon. But before they came to the breaking of the bread, and the communion ; a fire came down from heaven, which consumed in an instant, both all they had set upon their altar, and the stone itself ; so as to leave no remains, or footsteps of them. Upon this, they all of them fell to the ground, half dead with the fright ; and for some time could neither recover speech, nor motion. In this condition they were found by their friends, and carried home : to whom, as soon as they were able, they recounted all that had happened : and the marks of the fire, in the place where it fell, plainly demonstrated the truth of what they recounted. The bishop of Apamea, hearing of this extraordinary event, came out with all his clergy, and took cognizance of the whole matter,
upon

upon the spot ; by examining the boys, and viewing the footsteps of the fire : and in the conclusion, caused a monastery to be built in that field ; and a church erected there : the altar of which he fixed in the place, where the fire had fallen. And as to the boys, he placed them all in religious houses : and one of them was afterwards a monk, in the monastery, which he had built : where the same lord Gregory, who related to us this wonderful history, saw him, and knew him.

F I N I S.



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